

REPORT
ON
SOUTHERN
AFRICA

BY

BASIL DAVIDSON

of Germany: What Now? etc.

768

REPORT ON SOUTHERN AFRICA

By the same author

**PARTISAN PICTURE
GERMANY: WHAT NOW?**

Novels

**HIGHWAY FORTY
GOLDEN HORN**

BASIL DAVIDSON

REPORT ON
SOUTHERN
AFRICA



JONATHAN CAPE
THIRTY BEDFORD SQUARE LONDON

FIRST PUBLISHED 1922

**PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY WESTERN PRINTING SERVICES LTD., BRISTOL
BOUND BY A. W. BAIN & CO., LONDON**

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTORY

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| THE SMOKE THAT THUNDERS | 9 |
|-------------------------|---|

PART ONE

THE COUNTRYSIDE

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| 1: FIRST ENCOUNTERS | 21 |
| 2: IN CAPE TOWN | 30 |
| 3: SOIL AND PEOPLE | 37 |
| 4: APARTHEID | 47 |
| 5: AFRICANS 'AT HOME' | 55 |
| 6: INTO NATAL | 67 |
| 7: TO THE CITY OF GOL | 74 |

PART TWO

THE TOWNS

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| 1: 'LOCATION' | 83 |
| 2: MIGRANT LABOUR | 92 |
| 3: MINING COMPOUND | 102 |
| 4: THE REVOLT AGAINST MINING | 108 |
| 5: THE URBAN AFRICAN | 117 |
| 6: MOROKA | 129 |
| 7: THE IMPACT OF INDUSTRIALISM | 138 |

CONTENTS

PART THREE

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| 1: FUROR MALANICUS | 147 |
| 2: SECRET SOCIETY | 154 |
| 3: CHALLENGE TO NON-NATIONALISTS | 166 |
| 4: ANOTHER KIND OF AFRIKANER | 174 |
| 5: TRADE UNION NOTES | 183 |
| 6: SOME INSTRUCTIVE CONTRADICTIONS | 194 |

PART FOUR

IN BRITISH TERRITORY

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| 1: BASUTOLAND (1) | 205 |
| 2: BASUTOLAND (2) | 214 |
| 3: SOUTHERN RHODESIA | 224 |
| 4: NORTHERN RHODESIA | 240 |
| 5: 'CENTRAL AFRICAN FEDERATION | 255 |

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| THE CHOICE BEFORE US | 269 |
|----------------------|-----|

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| SOME IMPORTANT DATES | 275 |
|----------------------|-----|

| | |
|------------|-----|
| REFERENCES | 277 |
|------------|-----|

| | |
|-------|-----|
| INDEX | 283 |
|-------|-----|

To the Memory of
EDMUND DENE MOREL
and in gratitude
to many friends
in Africa

The references numbered consecutively
throughout the text, refer to the notes
on pages 277–81.

INTRODUCTORY

THE SMOKE THAT THUNDERS

FROM the Buckingham Palace Road the buses depart for the ends of the earth. *Delhi Jakarta Sydney Johannesburg*. Within the hall of the Airways Terminal a voice speaks from the lofty roof, telling these legendary names: a soft mellifluous Mayfair voice, introducing the utopia of long-range travel by air. Outside there is the England of rationing and rising prices and rearmament, the tedious third-class world of everyday: but here, taking wing from the Buckingham Palace Road, we have another England, the England of the British Council and the glossy brochures of the Central Office of Information, the gallant smiling land of Drake and Nelson, the glimpses of Windsor Castle, the spaniels on the lawn. Here, now, we are splendidly and royally first-class. This is a brave new world: at £300 a ticket.

As a group of passengers, we are not yet measuring up. We have still a third-class look about us. But give us time.

Heath Row: and we are hailed by a breathless smart air hostess, trim, neat, mascara'd. Bustle and importance. The Gentlemen have become Messieurs; though not yet, apparently, Herren. Where the Ladies go is labelled *Powder Room*. Then a beautiful Hermes 'Speedbird'. A British plane among all these foreign monsters bestriding our tarmac: and a reasonable glow of national pride.

Briefly and disgustingly, the smell of new leather and of engine oil, hot in the nostrils, and the sickening memory of wartime take-offs; but the door slams, and this memory is swept away, and we are peaceful passengers for the Union of South Africa.

Six hours southward at 225 miles an hour, seeing nothing because we are too high. Down through the landward haze to a desert

INTRODUCTORY

of cinder-red sands and settled plantations. *Fasten Seat Belts*. Tripoli in Africa.

As the door opens the old remembered heat of North Africa takes me by the throat, grilling, stifling. Later, nightbound, across the Sahara to Kano, city of the Emirs of Northern Nigeria: where the airport is cool and silent beneath new stars, and our plane is taken over by a fresh crew.

By breakfast time we are somewhere near the Equator, and two or three miles above it. When we come down to land at Brazzaville, on the French side of the Congo mouth, the country emerges lizard-green through the haze, wooded with brown and violet rivers of trees, broken with small abrupt hills. The horizons are flat, limitless, proceeding for ever; but now in the middle distance there is the silver mirror of the Congo, and, a little to the left, the bulge of Stanley Pool, where the inland waterways terminate. Stanley needed almost two years to walk across Central Africa from the east coast to the west coast: we are flying much the same distance in a single day. We are not even first-class now: we are godlike.

Southwards again across Angola, which is a colony of Portugal. Nobody seems to know much about Angola. The captain of our *Hermes* says that there are three emergency airstrips, 'which you'd find by chance if you had to'. Somewhere above a place marked on the map as Vila Luzo we cross the railway which links the mineral belt of the Katanga, in the Belgian Congo, with the Angolese port of Benguela: the jungle is cut away from the tracks in a broad swathe on either side.

These are the latitudes of the great Victorian explorers, of Stanley, Livingstone, Speke. It is impossible to fly over them without reflecting on the inner strength and courage of men who walked through these nameless lands, down there, literally for years. What drew them on? As much as anything, no doubt, the unshakeable conviction of their own superiority. Livingstone, the medical missionary, burned with the determination to open Africa 'to those two pioneers of civilization . . . Christianity and Commerce'. But Livingstone, unlike others who came after, had no idea of specifically white superiority. So much is clear from his dry and down-to-earth writings, and above all from the con-

tempt he had for the Boer attitude of master-and-slave. Livingstone's sense of superiority, no matter how strangely misplaced it may seem in the light of what happened later, was distinctly civilized. 'As far as I am myself concerned,' he wrote after completing his journey across Central Africa from west to east, 'the opening of the new central country is a matter for congratulation only in so far as it opens up a prospect for the elevation of the inhabitants. As I have elsewhere remarked, I view the end of the geographical feat as the beginning of the missionary enterprise. I take the latter term in its most extended signification, and include every effort made for the amelioration of our race.'¹

Pregnant thought. *Our race*, wrote Livingstone after crossing this country a hundred years ago, the white race and the black race, the human race. His view was scientific as well as moral. But 'Christianity and Commerce' promoted another idea of civilization. Never could a man be more amazed at seeing what processes he had helped to start than Livingstone would be, were he now to step down from his noble plinth above the Victoria Falls, and walk across the narrow bridge that crosses the canyon into the town that bears his name.

All this great region, from the southern border of the Congo to the Cape of Good Hope, two thousand miles or so as the crow flies, is the region of permanent white settlement. In this region the white man has taken his own specific and inevitable superiority for granted. He has ignored, and ignores, the scientific evidence to the contrary.² He has done so elsewhere: but it is here and in East Africa, where he is settled as a native, that the crisis of race relations becomes acute in our day and age. Though the region has infinite variety within its borders, its social structure is everywhere framed on the same model. In this book, accordingly, we begin with South Africa but we afterwards look at some of the territories to the north of South Africa.

There is no 'dense and impenetrable jungle' in this great region, apart from the banks of the Zambezi: its vegetation, once you are south of the tropical rain forests of the Congo basin, is divided into 'grasslands,' 'fertile grasslands', and 'arid and semi-desert lands'. We shall see some typical examples. Along the Atlantic Coast there stretches a narrow belt of waterless desert: right at the southern tip, at the Cape of Good Hope,

INTRODUCTORY

there nestles a wonderful pocket of Mediterranean climate and vegetation.

It is a region of primeval human settlement. Very possibly it was in these forests and plains that man first descended from the trees and walked upright upon the earth. Bechuanaland was the scene of Professor Dart's discovery in 1925 of part of a skull of 'an immature creature of ape-like appearance' which he called *australopithecus*, the Southern Ape; and which seemed to be the 'missing link' between the apes and man.³

Anthropologists know enough to say that man has gone through many stages of his evolution in southern Africa. They know that the land was inhabited in times before history; and that Africans—long before the coming of the white man a few centuries or decades back—had achieved a recognizable culture and social organization at different times and places. These cultures destroyed themselves or were destroyed by the white man: what remains in central and southern Africa today is a tangle of broken traditions and a mist of new ideas. Out of this tangle and must an African consciousness now begin to form itself. It is this consciousness, arising with new force from the social and economic pressures of our day, that calls the white man's supremacy in question. The white man wishes to continue as before: the African gropes for a new life. . . .

A little after four o'clock our Hermes comes down closer to the grey unending plateau; and we can see, crossing this monotony, a slender thread of silver which is possibly the great river Zambezi. But is it the Zambezi? It looks too small for such a mighty river, only a ribbon of light wandering across the green-brown carpet of Africa. Nearer still, there becomes visible a little cloud that hangs close to the ground, a cloud like the smoke from a jungle fire. Then abruptly we are low above this little cloud of smoke: and it is not smoke but spray, a spiral of spray mushrooming far into the air, the spray of the Victoria Falls. Africans have called it 'the smoke that thunders'.

Livingstone, too, when he first approached the Falls in 1855, compared this cloud of spray with smoke. Now we see it clearly: the spray

THE SMOKE THAT THUNDERS

and beneath the spray the majestic cataract of the Zambezi, as the great river plunges without warning into a knife-like fault in the earth's surface, and boils and twists away through zig-zag canyons.

The Victoria Falls are unforgettably impressive. 'You can't boost these Falls too much,' observes the second pilot who sees them often; and he is right. Whether you see them from the air or from the land, they remain a great and awe-inspiring monument to disaster. Even a little way up-river, the Zambezi makes no hint of its appalling intentions; it is only when you are a hundred yards or so above the Falls that you notice the gathering speed, the sense of rush and hurry, and understand the meaning of the smoke and spindrift high above you.

Up-river there is the silence of primeval jungle: the banks are low on either side, and there are many small islands shielded by a frieze of fringing trees and palms, dark green and lush green, and always silent. Sometimes, but not often, great flapping black birds fly above the trees with the awkward antique look of pterodactyls, their long tails trailing, and crack the silence with crake-like noises. Nothing has changed since Livingstone saw it first.

The Zambezi is deceptive. Steering along the banks in a motor-boat, I peered into their shapeless confusion and saw no living thing. But the boatman shouted and I saw that there were snouts of black timber on the surface, and these were hippos. The snouts of timber shifted a little as we passed, rose and sank a few inches, and were still again. Hippos, unlike the spidery Rhesus monkeys that we met, have no time for tourists. Then, steering down toward the Falls, I saw the river going faster, and bubbling and swirling about the snags and fringed islands; and our boatman made for the bank.

For at this point, only at the brink of the Falls, the brown flood of the Zambezi abandons the serene and servile manner that has carried it through Central Africa, and plunges, maddened, murderous, all-consuming, into this awful cataract. Deceptive is the Zambezi: for miles and miles, almost for ever, it flows quietly and unobtrusively: but then it gathers speed with terrible decision and sweeps across the Victoria Falls. You can stand on the bank and watch it flying downward, and see how nothing could withstand it and no living thing survive it.

INTRODUCTORY

There are worse places than the Victoria Falls to begin the study of Africa. Here at the Falls Hotel, an elegant yet comfortable resort which is operated for tourists by the Rhodesian Railways, the tawny servants from Angola and Barotseland are quiet and unobtrusive, moving humbly on bare feet and speaking almost not at all. But do not be deceived—for the brown flood of the Zambezi is not the only brown flood in Africa, and the one, no doubt, is no more deceptive in its convenient servility than the other.

'Are you writing a book about us?' asks a doctor from Salisbury, hospitably introducing himself within two minutes of my sitting down in the lounge of the Falls Hotel: 'Then you'll need a drink: we've some tidy muddles out here.' And he plunges at once, with all the recklessness of the Zambezi, into a lecture on the Problem, the racial problem, the only problem that seems to matter in these parts. He tells me that he himself is an immigrant from England of only seven years' standing, but it is at once clear that he might as well have been here all his life; and we are soon discussing the Problem in terms which are not two days removed from the Buckingham Palace Road but two generations, even two centuries. . . .

Later in the evening we are still embedded in the Problem. Around us now the lounge of the Falls Hotel has filled with guests, for this is Dance Night, and the Falls Hotel is in some sense the cap and centre of Rhodesian society. Everyone comes here: the directors and farmers, the mechanics and manufacturers, the rich and the not-so-rich and even the relatively poor: white men in these parts have to stick together. The director, no doubt, does not sit with his white employee; but the white employee sits with the director's wife, and the director's wife has to grin and bear this intrusion as she may. In short, there is a good deal of sniffing and snorting in private, of tossing of heads and critical staring: but the unity of white supremacy is nonetheless upheld.

The doctor from Salisbury is still banging away at the Problem. 'The black man must have his loophole for advance, that's what I say'—it's his favourite formula—'he's like a child, but he must have his loophole. Let him have his Buick, I say, provided he can earn it.' An African in

THE SMOKE THAT THUNDERS

Rhodesia, it transpires some time later, thinks he is doing well at two pounds a week.

The doctor didn't like the Labour Government, above all he didn't like the Labour Government's colonial liberalism; but he dislikes the South African Nationalists almost as much. The one pampers the natives, he says, and gives them ideas above their station; but the other drives them mad. 'Here in Rhodesia we're trying to steer a middle course. But in the Union, now, they're heading for bloodshed, for civil war.'

Those quiet and kindly brown men, with their modest manners and their dignified half-frightened eyes? Civil war?

'Well, look at it for yourself,' says the doctor. 'You pay your boy a couple of quid or so a month. He's glad to get it. And what then? You want to entertain your friends now and then, don't you? And then your boy sees you splashing away as much as that on drinks in one evening. And he's bound to think, isn't he? He's not so stupid as all that.'

So the African must have his loophole. But what is a loophole? 'Well, he's got to feel able to better himself somehow or other. We don't know quite how, but we've got to make him feel that. We've got to let him have his Buick as soon as he can earn it. As soon as he learns to work.'

'Skilled work?'

'Of course. Some Africans are quite intelligent. They can learn. They're children, but children grow up in the end. Let them be trained as skilled workers, I say, and earn a better wage.'

'You don't mind them competing with white workers? Drawing level with white workers?'

'We do,' agrees the doctor. 'Or rather the white workers do. But it can't be helped.'

'Then wouldn't you get some of the Africans rising in social status above some of the white workers?'

'No, no. We can't afford that at any price. Then you'd get mixed marriages and half-breed children—an impossible situation.' The doctor is very earnest about this.

'Then how do you reconcile your policy of encouraging Africans to

INTRODUCTORY

become skilled workers with your determination not to allow Africans equality of status with whites?’

The doctor says tartly: ‘Well, I don’t know. I’m a doctor, not a politician. I don’t know all the answers. But I’m sure of one thing—the native’s got to have his loophole.’

Apparently it is going to be far from easy to know exactly what a loophole is. Towards midnight, the doctor orders another round of double whiskeys, and says finally: ‘Look here, the white man can sleep with a black woman any time he likes. But the black man who sleeps with a white woman—he gets hanged. We’ve got to stamp on it, my friend.’ He looks at me suspiciously: ‘Both ways.’

And all this time the humble unobtrusive servants from Angola and Barotseland thread their nimble way among the swaying dancers, careful never to touch them; and outside, less than a mile away, the Falls thunder their warning in the night like great engines of catastrophe.

This warning is variously interpreted. Some, like the doctor, look nervously for loopholes. Others are less enterprising, or less nervous. On my way to bed I pick up a copy in the lounge of *The Rhodesian Monthly Review*, a magazine which is published in Salisbury by an advanced thinker of the name of Olley.

Mr. Olley is not among the nervous ones. He is trenchant. He is pukka. He has lots of opinions, and all of them are positive. Two-thirds of his magazine is labelled *Editorial*, for Mr. Olley has a great deal to say. ‘In our view,’ he writes in February 1951, ‘war is inevitable. . . . It is our frank opinion that in these days of social security that the time has come to crush the power of trade unionism. . . . The Home Government policy is typically Communistic because it has as its principle all for one and one for all with equal opportunity irrespective of ability, educational background or refinement. . . .’

Mr. Olley has great educational background. ‘In parts of India,’ we read in his March number, ‘one might well mistake a human for an ape, and in this Colony we have seen mistakes in which native youngsters have been taken for baboons and shot at. Would (British) Parliamentary leaders admit to their homes such humans? Would they marry

THE SMOKE THAT THUNDERS

their daughters to such scum as can be found in so many parts of the world? Would they?’

But he also has refinement. Urging the undesirability of admitting immigrants from central and southern Europe, he writes that ‘the United States is a typical example of the introduction of aliens from the south of Europe in particular. The United States is a mass of low-class human beings, racketeers, and killers. Indeed the States are renowned for crime of all sorts. What is more: as the result of inter-breeding between races, experts now say that 45 per cent of the population are sub-normal.’

With this imposing thought to sleep on, it is clearly time to go to bed.

PART ONE

THE COUNTRYSIDE

FIRST ENCOUNTERS

FROM Livingstone to Johannesburg, which is days by railway, Hermes takes a little less than four hours. We fly over Khama's country, barren, sand-brown, and broom-green, where the clouds are small still puff-balls. Beneath each puff-ball lies a lake of inky-blue shadow, and among these little lakes of shadow the thirsty land runs in long undulations, dreadfully bare, to the borders of the Bakwena Reserve and Sebele's country. In all this camel-coloured wasteland there is no sign of humanity or habitation to be seen, and yet this is one of the less uninhabited parts of Bechuanaland. Beyond the flat western horizon there is still the Kalahari, as empty as a desert, and beyond the Kalahari there stretch the semi-deserts of Dama aland, and at last the Atlantic Ocean.

Over the Western Transvaal we find complete cloud-cover. But later the clouds thin out, and through them the ground is cinnamon red with water courses that crawl across it like sage-green slugs. There are trees now; and stretches of bush country. Scattered *faunsteads* are set in flecks of white upon the red and green earth. Nearing Johannesburg there is more cultivation: and signs of irrigation along the Crocodile River. This is South Africa.

(Last night, though, we have already seen the Rand in a glitter of lights, wonderfully dramatic; for we had flown from Livingstone to Johannesburg only to be turned back by low visibility which prevented us, at the last moment, from landing. But this is how I shall always see the Rand, as a sharp curving sword of golden lights laid upon the darkness, glittering, aggressive, with an angry beauty perilous to touch.)

Here in South Africa lies the heart of the Problem. An elderly English passenger, long since retired from the Regular Army, tells me that he settled in Heidelberg, a Transvaal town near the Rand, nearly

THE COUNTRYSIDE

twenty years ago, and is now the owner of a prosperous business. He is a decent kindly man whose wife, he says, is so troubled with the servant problem—an important aspect of the Problem—that he and she are almost ready to do the washing-up themselves. He works his cookboy fifteen hours a day for every day of the year, he explains rather apologetically, but he doesn't like the man's attitude any longer. The Nationalists, he says, are stirring up racial hatred; and the good old days are past and done. During the war, in Heidelberg, the Nationalists publicly burnt three Union Jacks, because they are also stirring up hatred against the English; and, what with one thing and another, this business man has just been visiting Rhodesia in order to open up a branch of his business there. 'Just in case,' he explains, 'for, really, we don't know any longer just what's going to happen down here.' This kindly comfortable retired officer is obviously not built for worry; yet he is worried about many things. His old certitudes, he feels, are gone.

We land at Palmietfontein, the airport of Johannesburg, in the lovely sunshine of early winter. The Buckingham Palace Road lies at the other end of the world, and in more senses than one.

Looking back on those first days in the Union of South Africa, I can see that adjustment required an effort. South Africans are fond of saying that the situation in their country is unique; this may or may not be so, it is certainly unusual. The unusualness resides in the fact that there are about two and a half million whites and about nine million non-whites, and that between these two there exist relations of inequality, hatred, and contempt which are hard to convey in words, and which are rapidly becoming worse.

As an introduction, there was an interesting story which Leonard Barnes recounts in one of his books. He tells how he once accompanied an Afrikaner pastor (an ordained minister of the Dutch Reformed Church), who was also a prominent member of the South African Parliament, on a nocturnal tour of the Cape Town slums. 'The Cape Town slums are among the worst in the world, and we were witnesses that night of heart-breaking scenes of squalor, disease, and abject want. There were perhaps three European derelicts among the several hun-

FIRST ENCOUNTERS

dreds of coloured people into whose tenements we wormed our way. My parson was visibly moved by what he saw. At the end, I asked him what he thought of it all. His reply was: "It is terrible. We cannot possibly allow white men to live in such conditions." "4 Though more than twenty years old, the story has not lost its sting.

Some months before my arrival in the Union a middle-aged white man was brought before the magistrate in Cape Town, and charged with immorality. Together with his accomplice, a Coloured woman, this white man pleaded guilty. Now, it is necessary to remember in this connexion that illicit intercourse between white and African was made criminal by an Act of 1927; this Act was extended in 1950 to illicit intercourse between white and Coloured (the Coloureds being a mixture of white and non-white strains, and culturally a distinct community from the Africans); in 1949, meanwhile, one of the first steps taken by Dr. Malan's Nationalist Government was to pass an Act forbidding all mixed marriages. The white man in this particular case had lived with his Coloured friend for some years; they were getting on in life, were apparently much attached to one another, and wished to get married. In the meanwhile, legislation made all intercourse between them criminal; and the magistrate was severe with the man. Addressing the court in mitigation—I am quoting from the *Rand Daily Mail*—counsel for the defence explained that 'R. intended marrying this woman, but his divorce was not finalized until after the Immorality Act was promulgated. He approached a priest to marry them, but was told the only place where they could get married was Lourenço Marques [in Portuguese East Africa]. He could not afford that.'

It might be thought that this was a case for sympathy rather than sanctions. But the magistrate had another opinion. He inflicted due penalty and said: 'Why don't they clear out of this country to where they can carry on as they like?'

Three hundred years have passed since Jan van Riebeeck landed with his little colony of Dutchmen at the Cape of Good Hope. In all this time the white settlers have conquered and taken the land; but the black men, the inhabitants, obstinately remain. They have not 'cleared out'. In other continents of white settlement, dispossession of the indigenous

THE COUNTRYSIDE

inhabitants meant their gradual extinction. It meant this in North America, in New Zealand, in Australia. But the Dutchmen and Englishmen who settled in southern Africa failed to exterminate the natives whom they overran and dispossessed. They destroyed the peoples that they found near the Cape, the Hottentots and the Bushmen, or absorbed them into a coloured population which now exceeds a million; but the Bantu proved too many and too enduring. The energetic tribes whom the colonists invaded beyond the Great Fish River survived their defeat. The black men became the white men's helots. They passed, as Professor de Kiewiet has remarked, 'from barbarism to pauperism'; they were introduced, as others held, to the blessings of Christianity and commerce.

Thus it came about in course of time that the settlements in South Africa, themselves a product partly of imperialism, developed within the society they established an imperialism of their own. They 'colonized' the Bantu, the non-European. Just as the old imperialism exploited its colonies oversea as a source of quick abundant profit, so the white settlers of southern Africa have used the Bantu as a means to the same end. The few have become rich; the many have remained poor. If one compares the average wealth of all the inhabitants of the Union of South Africa with that of the average wealth of other British Dominions, the differences are startling. An official Commission reported in 1935 that the *per capita* income of South Africa was about one-third of that of Australia, one-quarter of that of Canada, and one-fifth of that of the United States: even Spain had a higher individual income than South Africa.⁵ Johannesburg may be wealthier in large American motor-cars than any other town outside the United States; it is also full of slums where destitution is complete.

Had the white settlers exterminated the inhabitants, things would have gone differently; and it is fair to add that sporadic attempts were made toward this end. In the long run, the settlers settled down to live with the inhabitants, generally known as the Bantu—but with the Bantu as their slaves, or near-slaves. And upon this single but tremendous fact the society of South Africa, with all its strangeness, is founded.

First impact with the consequences is difficult to forget. It is difficult

FIRST ENCOUNTERS

not to feel, at the beginning, that one is being duped into believing a wild exaggeration. 'It was with almost incredulous horror'—writes a lady to the *Johannesburg Star* in 1951—'that I read the article in *Stoep Talk*, "The South African Protection Society", which has presented its first gold medal to a boy who refused to touch any food for two and a half days, because it was prepared by an Indian cook. . . .' Now, the South African Protection Society has nothing to do, organically, with Dr. Malan and the Nationalist Party: the notion that racialism in South Africa is the preserve of the Afrikaners, or the Afrikaans-speaking people of South Africa, will in any case not take you very far.

But perhaps this incident was a weird exception? And yet . . . The South African Airways Corporation, which operates an international service and must therefore carry passengers of all conceivable colours, lately issued a circular with instructions 'regarding head-covers on the seats of planes' to the effect that 'these must be changed immediately if the seat has been used by a non-European passenger'; and went on to explain that such contaminated articles were by no means to be laundered in the usual way, but must undergo 'hygienic processing and dry-cleaning'. Air hostesses were to 'red-tag' such covers.

As you approach a little nearer to the facts, and pass from reading the newspapers to meeting the people, you begin to see that after all you are not being duped. Improbably enough, the exaggerations are in truth the reality. No doubt there may be countless exceptions: there is a minority of white men and women which abominates this reality and tries with much self-sacrifice to change it; there is contradictory kindness even by the majority of white men and women; there is missionary endeavour. But for all these contradictions, South Africa remains a country where racial oppression dominates the whole scene, penetrates the most intimate relations between man and man and man and woman, invades the lives of everyone, tempts and besieges even the most unwilling heart.

In terms of civilization, it is hard to say who suffers the more from this racial crucifixion—the white man or the non-white man. For if it is true that the non-white man suffers poverty, disease, contempt, and the imminent danger of extermination by 'natural' causes, it is no less true

THE COUNTRYSIDE

that the white man suffers by losing all touch with a healthy belief in humanity. Mr. Olley, up in Rhodesia, is no doubt an advanced case in the records of racialist disease; yet the poison of Mr. Olley's thought infects many who would repudiate Mr. Olley's way of saying things.

For the man from Europe—the mere European—it cannot but seem that many whites in South Africa are driven, or are driving themselves, into an emotional corner which is the reverse of healthy. They accept situations in their daily life which make absurdity of their beliefs. Wander through the pleasant residential suburbs of Johannesburg, luxurious with lawns and flowers, and you will see white children in the care and trust of non-white nannies; in these large well-furnished houses you will find non-whites employed to cook the food, to make the beds, to clean the clothes and closets; and yet the employers of these non-whites will generally find it abhorrent beyond words to travel in the same bus, or eat at the same table, or talk on terms of equality, or shake hands, with these intimates: or at all to think of them in terms of common humanity—in the terms that Livingstone, for instance, thought of them when he wrote of 'the effort for the amelioration of our race'. The nature of South African society has produced in the whites an ambivalence towards the non-whites which takes a lot of understanding and even more forgiving: on the one hand the whites know deeply that they need the non-whites and cannot do without them, while on the other they seem to wish them anywhere but in South Africa. The white man in South Africa is dependent in almost every hour of his daily life upon the ministrations of the non-white: but these ministrations, far from mollifying the white man, have become a bondage which he knows no way of throwing off, which cramps his sense of freedom, and goes hand-in-hand with a glowing hatred.

This is not a new thing. Its origins lie far back. All that is happening now is that the Nationalists of South Africa are rapidly turning the irreconcilable into the unbearable. No one can be long in this country without sensing strong currents of emotion. 'If only there were some way,' runs the white man's dream, 'of having them here and yet of not having them here': but *they*, like the waves of the sea, rise and run and fall upon the white man's world without remission. The latest version

FIRST ENCOUNTERS

of this white man's wish-dream is the doctrine called *apartheid*, which has promised, by some magical process, to keep the Bantu in South Africa and yet not to keep them there. . . . Upon one of the days I spent in South Africa two Nationalist authorities spoke their mind: and the first said that the Government must stop the drift of Natives to the urban areas, and the second said that the Government must promote urban industry by recruiting more Native labour from the countryside. Without Bantu labour the farms and factories of South Africa would become a desolation within five minutes: but to live with the Bantu is intolerable. Therefore some 'solution' must be found, even though the problem be insoluble: and the 'solution' is a wish-dream, a myth, a tattered little ideology which at least will shield one from reality.

Dr N. Diederichs, a Nationalist Member of Parliament, who is reputedly a leading ideologist of *apartheid*, gave me two hours of his valuable time in Cape Town. 'I admit,' he concluded after a long discussion, 'that we do not have a hundred per cent solution. All we can hope to do is to stave them off, stave them off, for as long as we can—and bring in white immigrants in the meantime'. Another ideologist of the wish-dream, Professor A. C. Cilliers, of Stellenbosch University, proposed some time ago that all the Bantu of South Africa, nearly eight millions of them, should be moved in a body north of the Limpopo river into Central Africa: a 'solution' which the Rhodesian settlers, struggling to make sense of their own version of the wish-dream, notably failed to appreciate.

No serious South African will argue any longer (at least in private) that *apartheid*, the complete and geographical segregation of the white from the non-white at all levels, can work, or even begin to work. *Apartheid* was a useful electoral cry in 1948: its significance by 1952 was even less than that. Repression of the non-whites will continue and grow worse, but the attempt to mask this repression behind some humanist or intellectual justification is almost done with. In April 1949, Dr. W. M. Eiselen, another leading exponent of complete segregation, could still believe, apparently, that whites and non-whites in South Africa might each develop, fully and independently, 'within their own spheres'. Today it is strange to look back on what this

THE COUNTRYSIDE

Nationalist authority, a sincere and decent man according to his lights, was writing at that time. 'The choice of our day', he was saying, 'is co-operation or *apartheid*. We are free to choose the easy way of temporary prosperity by way of co-operation (between white and non-white) to be gradually engulfed by our native proletariat, and, when it is too late, to go under in a hopeless last stand. The alternative, the challenge to this generation, is to build, no matter how immense and impossible the task may seem, no matter what unbearable sacrifices may be demanded of us, a self-sufficient independent European state for the generations to come.'

Brave words indeed. But the bravery soon faded. When I talked to Dr. Eiselen two years later—he had become in the meantime the permanent head of the Native Affairs Department—he was a sad and sorry man, doggedly trying to conceal the all too obvious fact that his beliefs had proved illusory. White South Africa has not chosen 'the easy way of temporary prosperity'; but it has not chosen the 'unbearable sacrifices' either. White South Africa has made no choice: it has continued to behave as its fathers and grandfathers behaved. If the world and history would stand still, perhaps this abdication of responsibility might get away with it. But the world spins, and spins toward racial equality everywhere; and history will not stand still. This being so, white South Africa reflects the manners of the past with a new knowledge of fear, with a tightening of the nerves, with fingers ever easier on the trigger, and with minds locked fast behind barriers of prejudice which already resemble a prison, and might so easily resemble a grave.

'I wish to state,' declared the careful but passionate Dr. Eiselen, 'that in spite of all our *ad hoc* arrangements the position is today far more explosive than it has ever been, and that the danger [to white supremacy] is growing day by day.' And that was said in 1948, since when three years of Nationalist Government have turned the screw until the aching pain of racialism has become an agony, a crucifixion.

And yet, when the worst is said, the agony is only one side of the picture. There remains another side, the side of humanity and hope, of emergent forces within this tortured society that move towards a change, of white men and women (even though few) standing up to

FIRST ENCOUNTERS

repression and refusing to turn and run, of African men and women learning to claim new rights and to stand firm upon their claim. Few serious men and women you will meet with in South Africa will deny that their country is moving rapidly towards a general crisis of society. Whether that crisis brings violence and bloodshed with it or not, the history of South Africa will not therefore come to a stop. The clash will cause a new beginning: and the men and motives that will make this new beginning—this turn towards co-operation between all the inhabitants of South Africa, where real hope alone lies—are already in the field. They are the reasons why a study of South Africa is important today, and need by no means be a study in despair.

IN CAPE TOWN

THE Houses of Parliament in Cape Town are not at all exotic in form, though to the oversea visitor they are greatly so in content. Their general setting is reminiscent of the Palace of the Luxemburg in Paris for the important matter, at least, of having lovely gardens set alongside. But instead of roses and carnations you will find here another vegetation, rich and lurid: bougainvillea, golden shower, hibiscus, trees from Madagascar and Mauritius, scents and colours that would scream and clash in any northern climate. Beside this lush brilliance the buildings of Parliament are sad, sepia, and unoriginal, bearing all too heavily the limp hand of bureaucratic art. Jealously, the Mother of Parliaments, dove-grey and prim in Westminster, has dressed her daughters dreadfully the same.

The Senate and Assembly are modelled closely on the House of Lords and House of Commons; and much of the paraphernalia of procedure is formally the same. But the content bursts continually from this unnatural form, and things here are said and done in a manner that is strictly South African. Consider this Assembly, for example, during the debate upon the Bill to remove from the common voters' roll the large Coloured minority of the Cape Province, and to give this minority four separate (but white) representatives instead. The details of this Bill need not detain us here: broadly, its object was to repeat for the million-strong Coloured minority the act of another South African Government in removing from the common voters' roll the Africans of the Cape. That a part of both non-white peoples should have found themselves on the common voters' roll was the consequence of the more liberal attitude which the whites of the Cape Province maintained towards the non-white peoples for many generations—an attitude which has gradu-

IN CAPE TOWN

ally surrendered since the Act of Union, in 1910, to the clamant racialism of the former Boer Republics in the north.

The political inwardness of this particular debate was not so much concerned with the rights of the Coloured people as with the rivalry between the Nationalists, who are in, and the United Party, who are out. The United Party Government had had the support of the Nationalists in 1936 when Africans were removed from the common roll: today the United Party votes against a similar treatment of the Coloured people, but the reason for its changed attitude, admittedly, is not so much one of principle as one of practical politics. The Coloured people had 47,804 registered voters in August 1949, or more than a tenth of the European voters of the Cape Province; and these Coloured voters, no matter how discontented with the United Party, will never vote for the Nationalists. Their disfranchisement could therefore mean a loss of seats by the United Party to the Nationalists. And yet in this dark moment of 1951, when South Africa stands on the threshold of arbitrary dictatorship by the Nationalists, there may perhaps be more to it than this: the United Party, at long last, may have awakened a little to the need to protect the non-white peoples from the worst aspects of tyranny.

However that may be, the debate on this particular Bill is exceedingly instructive of contemporary trends in white politics. Here is the Assembly, much as at Westminster, with the Speaker's chair at one end and the House divided between the benches of Government and Opposition. Mr. Lawrence opens today: he is one of the leading adjutants of Mr. Strauss, the leader of the Opposition and of the United Party in succession to Smuts. Mr. Lawrence is an English-speaking South African from Cape Town. His brief today is sharp and clear: he opposes the Bill to remove the Coloured voters from the common roll, and provide them with a separate representation they do not want: he disposes of the Government's argument that such a removal does not mean a diminution of political rights. 'The Opposition has taken up the view from the start that the provisions of this Bill do involve a diminution of political rights enjoyed in the Cape Province for nearly a century. . . .'

But South Africa, as Professor Macmillan has observed, is complex.

THE COUNTRYSIDE

Mr. Lawrence, in stating the case against the Bill at this high idealist level, has not reckoned with some of his followers. Mr. Christie, for the Labour Party, speaks to the same effect; but Mr. Christie is followed by a Mr. Sullivan, United Party representative from Durban. And Mr. Sullivan proceeds forthwith to make hay of his leader's case. Mr. Sullivan, it is true, is not himself a native of South Africa, but he speaks nonetheless for that proud and compact body of electors who take their tradition from the English settlers of 1820. Natal is the English province of South Africa; and Durban is the English capital. Durban is also the home of a large part of the 320,000 Indians of South Africa, a minority (totally disfranchised) which is regarded by the English of Natal with much the same feelings as the Afrikaners of the Transvaal regard their 'Kaffirs'. Mr. Sullivan, accordingly, feels unable to follow his leader into high-minded idealism.

'To be consistent,' he points out with indignation, 'the Government should restore the full present franchise rights to Coloured voters in Natal.' Furthermore, and worse still, 'this confirmation of a franchise for the Asiatics in the Cape Province can become a pattern for the Union—that is the point I want to emphasize'. He wants to assure the Minister, he goes on, disregarding the discomfort on his own side of the House, 'that we in Natal . . . do not want any aspect of the proposed franchise for the Asiatics in the Cape to be extended to Natal'. After the chairman of committee has restored order, which he is obliged to do at this point, Mr. Sullivan plunges onward: 'Mr. Chairman, there is another danger in this clause (of the Bill). Just shortly after this Government came into power the Minister of the Interior went so far as to promise the Indians of Natal an advisory council, very much on the lines as is now proposed for the Coloured Advisory Council. Now we can regard that as a beginning of a separate electoral roll in Natal for the Indians. . . .'⁶

Just at the very moment, in short, when the leaders of the United Party are trying to prove that *their* Government would uphold the rights of the non-white peoples, the United Party member for Durban asks for assurances that the Nationalists will on no account afford the Indians such rights, or even the shadow of them.

IN CAPE TOWN

After this misfortune for the Opposition case, the debate languishes until Dr. Bernard Friedman, a liberal *rara avis* in the United Party, does a little to enliven it; and is followed by Mrs. Margaret Ballinger, one of the three Native Representatives, who does a lot. She and Mr. Sam Kahn, who was a member of the self-dissolved Communist Party and is another of the Native Representatives in Parliament, carry between them the heat and burden of the day. Mrs. Ballinger is a liberal who would probably be a member of the Labour Party in Britain. She is a brave and generous South African whose forthright tongue and unrepentant manner have long since quelled the backveld anti-feminism of the Government benches. She is one of the few members of the South African Assembly who seem to have travelled outside the boundaries of their own country with a mind receptive to new ideas: most of the Nationalist members, it is important to note, have never travelled outside their own country even with closed minds. Why should they, after all? The problems of South Africa, they hold, are unique to South Africa, and the general experience of history and humanity will not help to solve them.

It is Mrs. Ballinger, above all, who has lashed this Government (and earlier the Government before it, the Government of Smuts) with the lessons of experience from parliamentary democracy at home. It is she who introduces to this Parliament the note of parliamentary tradition which seems otherwise so strangely absent. She goes straight to the point, and has Dr. Dönges, the all too suave Minister of the Interior, presently writhing. The Africans of the Cape were removed from the common roll by the Coalition Government of 1936: their three seats, elected by a separate roll, are now 'under sentence of abolition' by the Government; and this because 'this Government does not like what we say'. Now the time has come to remove the Coloured minority from the common roll and to set up separate representation: but the Coloured people, even with a separate roll, will still elect people whom the Government will dislike—how long then can even their *separate* representation be expected to last? She has Dönges in a cleft stick: must he admit that the Nationalists intend eventually to abolish even the separate representation of the Coloured minority, or must he go on record

with an assurance which might later be held against him? A skilful lawyer, Dönges evidently does not know quite what to say for the best: later on, having reflected, he makes a speech which says neither the one thing nor the other.

After Mrs. Ballinger there comes another passage at arms between United Party and Nationalist speakers, all of whom are exceedingly rude to each other; and then the House tightens its attention to listen to Mr. Sam Kahn. Mr. Kahn is one of the two or three individual reasons of importance why the Nationalist Government has taken such pains to pass an Act for the Suppression of Communism: Mr. Solly Sachs, the Johannesburg trade union leader, is another. This Act has little or nothing to do with the suppression of Communism, but much to do with the suppression of all those in South Africa who work effectively for the civil rights of the non-white peoples there: in this small company Mr. Kahn has an honourable and outstanding place. In its original form the Act was bilked of hurting Mr. Kahn or Mr. Sachs, because Mr. Sachs could prove that he was expelled from the Communist Party in 1932, and in any case the Communist Party, of which Mr. Kahn was a leader, had dissolved itself before the Act came into force. An amendment to the Act had accordingly to be passed which would gather in all who might be 'deemed' by the Government at any time to have been members of the Communist Party, or sympathizers in almost any degree. Suppressive action under this amended Act was reserved for the latter part of 1951.

Sam Kahn is an energetic young man of thirty-nine or so, and he does not pull his punches. 'The Nationalists,' he says, 'are experts at reducing the name of South Africa to something contemptible in the eyes of the people outside, because of the dereliction of their policy from democratic principles, because it has the odour—the malodour—of Hitlerism and Nazism in all the legislation they introduce. . . .'

This leads to an entertaining but also instructive interchange of compliments:

Mr. Botha (Nationalist): We have had the phenomenon this evening of the United Party and the communist adopting exactly the same attitude.

IN CAPE TOWN

Mr. Kahn (Native Representative): On a point of order. May I ask whether it is parliamentary to refer to another member as a communist.

The Chairman: It is not permissible . . .

Hon. Members: Withdraw.

Mr. Botha: I am prepared to withdraw the word, but then I want to put it this way, that the hon. member who was elected as a communist and who stated openly that he was one . . .

Mr. Russell (United Party): On a point of order. I am not interested in the position of the hon. member for Cape Western (Mr. Kahn) but I am interested in the fact that the hon. member said that the communists and the United Party held the same views. He has to withdraw this out of respect for the United Party.

Mr. Kahn: On a point of order, am I not allowed to object to my name being coupled with that of the United Party?

Honours, no doubt, to Mr. Kahn, who is all on his own in this Assembly. But the fun is not quite over. Mr. Botha withdraws his word, but only to have another go at the United Party:

Mr. Botha (Nationalist): The attitude of the United Party and of the hon. member who has had himself elected as a communist is this, that they both stand for political equality between European and non-European.

Mr. Robinson (United Party): That is untrue.

Mr. Barlow (United Party): It is a lie.

The general picture that emerges from this debate is not untypical of the whole political scene in South Africa. It is the Nationalists, now as before, who with dogged determination drive in the nails of racial persecution, unmoved by any arguments but those of their own peculiar obscurantism, or by any facts but those they find convenient to recognize. It is the United Party which forms the big battalions of the Opposition: yet an Opposition that is weakened fatally by the ambiguous nature of its own beliefs and interests.

In other ways, too, this segment of debate is typical enough. The non-white nine millions have no voice in the Assembly: they speak, muffled, through three members who are not of their community how-

THE COUNTRYSIDE

ever gallantly these members may try to represent them. And of these three members, one at least becomes the subject of special legislation carefully designed to silence him. Yet behind their words, and behind all these words, there lies a country which calls desperately for help. At this late hour, perhaps, heroic measures can alone pluck it from disaster.

SOIL AND PEOPLE

THE Cape of Good Hope was settled by Dutchmen in 1652 and acquired finally by the British Government in 1806. Some time between these dates the Afrikaner nation was formed, the history of white South Africa began. But the men who landed from van Riebeeck's little ships in the haven of Table Bay, and saw in front of them the misty barrier of mountains which they later called Hottentots-Holland, were not rebellious spirits seeking a new life in a new land. There was no *Mayflower* in van Riebeeck's fleet. The object of the settlement at the Cape was not to found the new world: it was to establish a victualling station at a key point on the long route to the Indies, and if possible to make this station pay for itself. The history of the early governors of the Cape is the history of petty parsimonious negotiations between a handful of hard-up settlers and the Dutch East India Company in Amsterdam. For a long time the Company tried to make the colony pay: the colony never did. Afterwards there came the British, but for long years the plight of the settlers was little changed.

The Afrikaner nation was born thus into something of a moral and intellectual vacuum. Its begetters had brought from Holland the ideas and attitudes of seventeenth-century Calvinism along with the prodings of the Company, which had sent them to the Cape, for produce and economy. These ideas were not invigorated or informed by the spirit of revolt which animated some of the early settlers in North America; nor were they modified by contact with new ideas. There came into existence at the Cape a permanent but small white settlement, soon indigenous, which governed its conduct by ways of thought that remained stagnant, no matter what great events might stir the outside world. The year of 1812 might be memorable in Europe for the disasters which befell Napoleon: in South Africa it was memorable,

THE COUNTRYSIDE

and has remained so, for a circuit court which heard for the first time—shocking innovation—the evidence of black men against white men.

When, within less than twenty years of British occupation, the Cape began to feel the impact of European philanthropy, the Dutch settlers were unequipped to comprehend it. Impelled by anti-slave and liberal trends of thought at home, the British governors began to enact legislation which gave a measure of protection to the non-white inhabitants. The famous Ordinance of 1828 abolished the offence of 'vagrancy', and abolished passes for the coloured people. In 1834 the slaves of the Cape were declared free. And in 1835 Louis Trichardt initiated the Great Trek, drawing after him many Afrikaner farmers and frontiersmen far into the unexplored interior.

More than any other, the individual who provoked the Great Trek was Dr. John Philip of the London Missionary Society, a bold and liberal spirit long described in South African textbooks as a 'meddlesome missionary'. The spirit of the Trekkers was well enough defined by a remark attributed to one of them: 'Dr. Philip had got a law passed which would oblige a farmer to marry his daughter to a Hottentot, that he would rather shoot her than see her so degraded, and that Dr. Philip had taken all his slaves from him, and that he wondered at the mercy of God in suffering such a man to live.' But the Afrikaners have since corrected the mercy of God: one hundred years after Dr. Philip's death the South African Government secured an Act to undo the last remnants of Dr. Philip's work against colour discrimination. In 1951 South Africa put the clock back to 1826.

The Trek was a movement not towards new ideas but away from them. Behind the Trekkers, at the Cape, the British were at work in undermining the patriarchal order of life: the Boers, asking only to be left alone to enjoy that order of life in perpetuity, turned their ox-wagons with brave resolve towards the north. They destroyed the concept of the Cape Colony as a small compact region of predominantly white population, and decreed the growth of a white dominion. Others in their default, no doubt, would in any case have taken that trail later: the significant point is that the Boers, at this stage, carried

with them a slave-owning mentality which isolating themselves completely from the influences of the outside world. 'A large and determined part of the population moved beyond range of the modifying influences of the thought and swiftly changing mental climate of the mother country. . . . Deep into the nineteenth century they took the non-literary and non-industrial habits of the eighteenth century. Thus were fixed those attitudes and habits of mind which later returned from exile profoundly to influence all South Africa.'⁸ The Boers were out of date when they moved: they are out of date today. They have at least the dubious satisfaction of knowing that although the English later overtook them and defeated them, the English liberalism from which they fled was in turn overtaken and defeated by Afrikaner obscurantism. In terms of racialist prejudice, there seems little today to choose between the 'English' and the 'Dutch' natives of South Africa.

That said, it is still possible to wonder at the staunch and narrow courage which took these ox-wagons on their long trail north-eastward into the legendary lands of the Kaffir. The Cape of Good Hope, which they left, was perhaps not so physically delectable as it is now, but it must have been hard to leave for all that. Nowadays a car does the thousand miles to Johannesburg comfortably in two or three days; but ox-wagons are a different matter. In a little while, even with an ox-wagon, you would none the less have left the meadows of Paarl and Stellenbosch and have climbed the flank of the Hottentots-Holland range and have said good-bye to Table Mountain thirty miles away. Through the two main passes, Bain's Kloof and Du Toit's Kloof, there is still the long green tongue of the Hex River Valley—but beyond that, one or two pockets of good land apart, nothing awaits you but the bald wilderness of the Karoo. Whatever they lacked in enlightenment, the Trekkers lacked nothing in enterprise.

It was on the edge of the Karoo, one evening, that I caught for the first time what seemed an authentic breath of that lotus life, the *lekker lewe*, in pursuit of which the Boers departed for the north. Ideally, the Boers held, a man should own at least what he could cover by riding his horse for half an hour from a chosen central place to the four points of the compass: it was this that formed the basic measurement of their

THE COUNTRYSIDE

so-called 'farming grants'. Within these thousands of acres he would reign supreme, hospitable to his neighbours but not admitting them to intimacy, above all not admitting to any social rights and loyalties. Being of God's elect, he would toil not neither would he spin: but the sons of Ham should work for him and he should direct their labour. 'Their ideal State was a racial fellowship of large pastoral landholders with laws that aided them to acquire property easily when they did not have it and to retain it easily when they had acquired it.'⁹ In this spirit they dispossessed and, when necessary, exterminated the indigenous Bantu landholders. They did this, what was even more convenient, with a stern unbending sense of duty. They wanted land and free labour; and God had thoughtfully decided that they ought to take both.

Those who were lucky lived exceedingly well. I stopped one night at a little guest-house in a nook with warm springs in the Hex River Valley below the arid town of Worcester. The guest-house was poor and pretentious, serving food which would have shamed even an English seaside hotel, but the setting was magnificent. Hibiscus and bougainvillea bled upon the mountainside: in the warm still air cicadas strummed: palms gave shadow to a swimming pool of naturally warm and salted water. There were Coloured servant girls with flowers in their hair: from time to time they sang and laughed in the echoing distance. The evening sky was aflame with rosy light all round the horizon, and over everything there fell with twilight a deep dripping silence, an illusion of profound peace. It is this illusion of peace in solitude that has lain at the roots of the kinder aspects of the Afrikaner's ideology and given him the warmer parts of his culture.

The Boers prized this solitude high. Those who have read Deneys Reitz's *Commando* will recall how he and his comrades, towards the end of the Boer War, came one day upon 'a long narrow canyon lying at our feet, its sides closed in by perpendicular cliffs. On the floor of the chasm, a thousand feet below, we made out a cluster of huts, and, thinking to find natives there to guide us, we went down in a body to investigate. We climbed through a fissure in the crags, and reached the bottom soon after sunset. As we approached the huts, a shaggy giant in

goatskins appeared and spoke to us in strange outlandish Dutch. He was a white man named Cordier, who lived here with his wife and a brood of half-wild children, in complete isolation from the outside world. . . . Cordier told us that no British troops had ever penetrated this fastness and that we were the first Boers to do so. He had heard vaguely of the war, but his knowledge of the events of the last two years was scanty.'

This was an extreme case, but, bating a little the extremity, it was not untypical. As a community, the Boers had done their best to isolate themselves from the outside world, and, though they might be vaguely aware of its happenings, their knowledge of these happenings was at all times small. They stumbled into the South African War when the British tried to kill their independence without in the least understanding what was likely to be expected of them. The Commandant-General of the Boer Army, Piet Joubert, showed Reitz at the beginning of the war a cable which he had received from a Russian society offering to equip an ambulance in case of war. When Reitz expressed his pleasure, Joubert replied: 'You see, my boy, we Boers don't hold with these new-fangled ideas; our herbal remedies (*bossie-middles*) are good enough.' No doubt this naïvety greatly helped them to withstand the invading British armies for so long and with such valour.

The consequences of these Boer attitudes—and the English settlers have largely shared them—have long since come home to roost. To travel on the route of the Great Trek today is to see a ravaged country. South Africans argue that the Natives—the Africans—should be given no more land because they only ruin it with their primitive and wasteful methods of agriculture. But the truth is that the white farmers have shared, and share, these methods. The Bantu tribal custom was essentially nomadic: a tribe would settle for a few years, use up the surface fertility, and then decamp for virgin soil again. The Boers adopted much the same system, but made it much more rigorous. They staked claims to huge tracts of country, impressed slave or near-slave labour from the inhabitants and 'mined' the land for all it was worth. Erosion and deterioration have followed the . . . In the Karoo, much of which today is semi-desert, you can almost see the land disappearing under

your eyes. Even if that be an exaggeration, the reality is bad enough. 'The Karoo veld', confessed the report of the Union Government to the Food and Agriculture Organization in 1950, 'is advancing eastwards at the rate of one and a half miles a year. . . . It seems unlikely that any early solution of the stabilization of the Karoo veld will be found.'

In some parts of the Orange Free State the desert is said to be advancing at the rate of twenty-five miles a year, and in spite of much official propaganda little or nothing is being done to stop it. 'A team of South Africa's most brilliant young ecological botanists' reported *The Friend*, of June 1, 1951, 'is ready to publish the results of sixteen years of scientific research which show that Bloemfontein, by the turn of the century, will be in the middle of the spreading Karoo.' In April 1951, a writer in *Veld Trust News* estimated that at least 26 million morgen (about 60 million acres) of land was endangered by the southward spreading of the Kalahari Desert. Another writer in the same cautious publication said that 'the Kalahari Desert will soon have a very real and awful meaning for all South Africans, when they see the brown fingers of an extensive area from Upington to Prieska, and north beyond Kimberley and Mafeking, stretching into the Union'. For the first time, this advance of the desert 'will be accelerated by the tractors and ploughs of modern industry': the desert was not encroaching slowly, but with rapid strides.¹⁰ Perhaps that is why the Nationalist Government has delayed so long in publishing the results of the Desert Encroachment Commission, generally understood to have turned up some terrible facts, that was appointed by the previous Government.

Some sixty-six large rivers carry South Africa's 'mishandled soil' to the sea, according to Dr. T. D. Hall, a trustee of the National Veld Trust. Silt delivered by the Orange River is said to discolour the Atlantic Ocean for one hundred miles off-shore. Dr. Hall has described the estuary of the Umzimkulu River in Natal as looking like 'strong, bitter cocoa'.

One day at Colesberg, a small sheep town in the northern Cape Colony, I ran into one of the biggest horse-breeders in the Union, an affluent Old Etonian with horny hands and a great love of horses which he had indulged, at notable profit to himself and his family, for over

twenty years. He told me how the succulent bushes of the northern Karoo, so excellent for sheep, had during his time here given way in many regions to the useless scrub which already covers much of this great area. Merciless sheep and cattle grazing may be immediately profitable: in the long run it is proving the death of this country. 'The water sponges of the principal rivers of Natal,' declared one authority in the South African Parliament not long ago, 'are in danger of drying up, due to the destruction of the vegetation and the trampling of stock. Action to protect these river sources has been stressed for many years . . .' but without result.¹¹

Often this deterioration is worsened by the overcrowding of Native Reserves and the steadfast refusal of white landowners to sell land for the enlargement of native rural areas. White landowners appear to see nothing strange in prating of their desire to 'conserve the heritage of white civilization'—while at the same time acting in a manner calculated to turn this heritage into a desert. But the Reserves are not always the worst eroded regions. White-owned 'labour farms'—farms worked largely by African squatters who acquire their right to squat in exchange for providing the white farmer with free labour for three or more months a year—are often in a poor condition. 'Nowhere in the Union', remarked the same parliamentary authority of farms in the Weenen district of Natal, 'not even in the overcrowded Native Reserves, are there such devastating results of over-population and lack of control as can be seen on these European-owned labour farms. It is an example of wilful destruction of the country's wealth. Over large areas nothing remains of what was once fertile country.' And yet in 1844, when Henry Cloete rode round the Weenen district to register the farms of newly-settled trekkers, he found it 'lovely sheep and cattle country, the best in all Natal'.¹²

A 'mining' attitude to farming that is characteristic of white settlement in southern Africa has fitted well with the general development of the country's economy: step by step with the extraction of gold and diamonds, the white landowners have deflowered the soil in the same primitive way. Their attitude has not been one of careful loving cultivation, nor even one of scientific profit-taking: it has been a combina-

tion of the urge to get rich as quickly and painlessly as possible together with a lackadaisical willingness to pluck the gifts of nature whenever appetite prompted. The Afrikaners have combined a pre-capitalist improvidence with a grasping certitude that God's elect must flourish, no matter who else may have to starve. Their tragedy is that they have now undertaken to rule South Africa at a time when not only have the attitudes of pre-capitalism become archaic and absurd, but when even those of capitalism—towards which some of their leaders now grope—are deeply in crisis. The majority of Afrikaners are not conservative in the sense that they uphold the rules of 'free enterprise' *à l'américaine*: they are conservative in the sense that the Tories were conservative when Adam Smith propounded a doctrine for the Whig manufacturers of England. Some of them, it is true, are learning the rules of capitalism as fast as they can, and understand their advantage there. An Afrikaans Nationalist paper, *Insan*, pointed out in July 1951 that 'it was a matter of vital importance to the Afrikaners to capture a large share of the secondary industry in the country'. But the pattern of ideas which still governs most South African farmers seems still to be the pattern of slave-owning pre-capitalism; and the nature of their politics is shaped accordingly.

The farmers have squandered the land, but they have also squandered the people. Too often they have treated African workers with persistent disregard for the welfare of these workers as a group. Where they could take 'free labour' they have taken it: where the growing competition of the towns has forced them to pay wages they have paid the least possible. 'Officials of the Department of Agriculture found that the average cash wages on 199 maize farms in the north-eastern Free State were £5 16s. per year of three hundred working days, approximately 9s. 6d. a month. This was estimated to constitute 28 per cent of the total wage.'¹³ That was in 1930; but conditions in agriculture have changed little or not at all since then except that—if anything—real wages have fallen, as official figures for the years 1943–5 amply suggest (*Union Year Book*, 1948). In 1936 Mrs. Haines found in the Eastern Cape Province that the average cash wage on ten farms where she made inquiries—and where fifty-six heads of families were employed—was

13s. 10d. a month: the modal cash wage was 10s. a month and represented 36 per cent of the estimated total wage (estimated, needless to say, by the farming interests concerned). Workers in the sugar plantations of Natal have usually received two pounds for thirty days, or 1s. 4d. a day; in Zululand wages are still lower than this. The 'labour tenants'—really the dispossessed original inhabitants—have commonly been made to give ninety days' free service a year. 'In Natal the most common requirement has been six months' continuous service during which a cash wage of from five to fifteen shillings per month is usually paid.'¹¹

Using up humanity in this fine and free way, the farmers have always suffered from what they are pleased to call 'an acute shortage of labour'. They were complaining of this in the 1890's; and they are still complaining of it. The growth of manufacturing in South Africa now makes this shortage more acute; and it is probably true that the main new sources of farming labour in the Union today are illegal immigrants from neighbouring British territories—and the gaols of the Union itself. Illegal immigrants come in thousands across the long unguarded frontier of the Limpopo: when they are caught, as they almost always are (since they come equipped with none of the necessary passes), they are given by the South African police the alternative of being returned whence they came or of going to work on the farms. Often they choose the latter in the hope of being able to escape to the Rand, which is usually their hoped-for destination.

Another large contingent of farming labour is provided by Africans who have landed in gaol for one or other of innumerable trifling offences; and these Africans, lately, have been housed in special gaol-compounds kept by the farmers under their own armed guard. Since 1948 the authorities have also given special encouragement to farmers to build 'co-operative gaols', owned by the farmers, staffed by the Department of Justice, and filled with convicts provided by the Department. These convicts were being hired to farmers in 1951 at the rate of one shilling each a day. In a case that came to my knowledge near Springs, in the eastern Transvaal, the farmer generally gave his convicts a six months' contract, but was careful to pay them only a small pro-

THE COUNTRYSIDE

portion of their wages during the first five months; then, in the sixth month, he would habitually relax the guard on his compound, with the frequent result that the men made a run for it—leaving, naturally, their unpaid wages behind them. Conditions in these convict labour compounds are often terrible; and the law is usually the law of the lash. Small wonder, perhaps, that *The Star* of Johannesburg could write in December 1951 of ‘the trigger-happy Transvaal’, of ‘a country where the private gun is making life less and less safe for everybody’.

APARTHEID

'SIR, this here age wants a great deal,' Disraeli makes one of his characters say in *Sybil*, the novel that he published in 1845, 'but what it principally wants is to have its wages paid in the common coin of the realm.' This is probably the first thing that most African farm workers would have to say in this day and year, if anyone bothered to ask them. And the more one looks at South Africa, the more suggestive become the parallels with the England of a hundred years ago. 'There is no community in England,' wrote Disraeli in a famous passage: 'there is aggregation.' In South Africa, indeed, there is scarcely even aggregation, since most white South Africans are accustomed to think of their country as containing only two and a half million people, leaving to be counted with the cattle the nine or ten millions of non-white inhabitants.

'We lived meagrely in the bothy,' wrote Alexander Somerville of his life in a nurseryman's establishment of Edinburgh in the 1820's: 'oatmeal porridge of small measure and strength in the mornings, with "sour dook", a kind of rank buttermilk peculiar to Edinburgh; potatoes and salt, occasionally a herring, for dinner; and "sour dook" and oatmeal for supper. We never had butcher's meat, and seldom any bread. To have had even enough of this food it would have required all my wages. . . .'¹⁴ Yet in case the English observer be inclined to jump at the easy conclusion that South Africa is just a hundred years behind, he is well to be reminded of the fact that millions of unemployed in England, not more than fifteen years ago, were living far worse than this—and saw not even the herring or the 'sour dook'. In times of high employment, however, it seems generally true that the economic condition of the non-white labourer in South Africa today is much the

THE COUNTRYSIDE

same as that of the English or Scottish labourer on the eve of the industrial revolution.

White enclosure of the land of the Africans began with white penetration, and continued at a great rate during the nineteenth century. The principal was the old and royal one: that 'he should take who has the power and he should keep who can'. In the Orange River Sovereignty in 1852, for example, when the Europeans of this little State were estimated to number between 8,000 and 15,000, 'the total number of grants of land was 1,265, their average extent 9,000 acres. One hundred and thirty-nine British proprietors, many of them officials, owned on the average 18,000 acres apiece. Much of this land was held for speculative purposes and was unoccupied. . . .'¹⁵ North of the Sovereignty, across the Vaal, land for Europeans became almost a drug in the market.¹⁶ The Bantu inhabitants, as we have seen, were dispossessed of their traditional rights in the land, but were allowed to remain as serfs both because there was often nowhere else for them to go and because the invading farmers needed labour. Where they fought back, as for example the Amaxosa, the Zulus, and the Basuto fought back, they were put down in countless 'Kaffir wars'; and only the Basuto, by securing British imperial protection in the nick of time, managed to retain for themselves a large tract of land where the Boers could not come. But even the Basuto lost the rich plainlands to the east of their mountains, and were reduced to the upland pastures of what is now Basutoland.

Along with the enclosure of the land went a ruthless drive to obtain cheap labour from a people disinclined to work for their oppressors. In the Transvaal and the Orange River Sovereignty the Boers made no scruple of employing any coercion that might be needed. By means of 'labour taxes' and of obligations to render 'free service' to their white masters, Africans of all ages were impressed. In the Cape Colony and to a lesser extent in Natal (annexed by Britain in 1843) methods were different, since here at least in theory there could be no legal discrimination between white and non-white. With the advent of mining and of British capital—diamonds were discovered in 1867, gold a few years later—the 'shortage' of labour in South Africa became chronic; and

there was introduced the method of inducement by taxation that was to become a pattern for all white-settled Africa.

This method of obtaining cheap labour can be most typically found in Cecil Rhodes's famous Glen Grey Act of 1894. By this time we have left behind the days of trekking into the interior, and South Africa has become entangled deeply in modern imperialism. Everywhere the whites remained avid for labour, cheap African labour, as a principal means towards rapid exploitation. This avidity was regularly stimulated to the point of anguish whenever the shortage of labour became so acute as to make the level of African wages rise in spite of every effort to keep them down. Early in the 1890's Mr. Rhodes became aware that wages on the diamond fields were likely to rise because of persistent shortage in the supply of labour. This most energetic of imperialists devised a means of augmenting the supply; and although the means was not original—since the Boers had used it in a more primitive way—it was exceedingly admired at the time. He turned to some of those Native Reserves where the African population was high. His Act of 1894 provided that African males should pay a 'labour tax' of 10s. a year unless they could prove that during three months of each year they had been 'in service or employment beyond the borders of the district'—the governing idea, as Mr. Rhodes himself said, being that 'if they could make these people work they would reduce the rate of labour in the country'. Later on, Rhodes's Chartered Company in Rhodesia (the British South Africa Company) was to adopt the same approach, and with similarly profitable results.

This method of coercing Africans to leave their rural life and seek labour in the towns, in order that they may earn the cash to pay taxes they cannot otherwise pay, is of paramount importance for an understanding of the Union and of all southern Africa. It became the sovereign remedy of an imperialist economy and it persists in full force today. Often it is camouflaged under a pretence that 'the Natives ought to contribute something to the common fund for payment of the social services they receive': but its origin and over-riding purpose are frankly coercive. In 1880, for example, a magistrate in Tembuland (Cape Colony) could report that: 'In order that money might be obtained to

THE COUNTRYSIDE

pay hut tax, hundreds of young men have been sent into the Colony by their relatives to work in the towns and among the farmers. The frequent recurring necessity of having to find money for their friends will gradually force the young men out of the groove in which they have been living and moving from day to day, and from year to year.'¹⁷ Rhodes, perhaps needless to say, could dress this practice in the large and philanthropic terms of Victorian enterprise. Of the Glen Grey Act, he remarked in the Legislative Assembly that: 'You will remove them [the Africans] from that life of sloth and laziness, you will teach them the dignity of labour and make them contribute to the prosperity of the state. . . .'

These remarks have lost none of their freshness. As lately as 1938, for instance, the District Commissioner at Molepolole in Bechuanaland could bear out fully what the magistrate in Tembuland had been saying fifty-eight years earlier. 'The wages earned by these [mine] workers,' he reported, 'are by far the main source of income in the district, and without this money, trade and tax collections would be almost at a standstill.' To put it more briefly: no taxes, no labour.¹⁸

By the year of Union, 1910, enclosure of African land by Europeans had gone as far as the sheer pressure of population could be made to admit; and the apparatus of coercion upon the African to seek labour from white employers was complete. Within three years of obtaining self-government, white South Africa passed the key Act of 1913, by which African holdings of land were 'pegged' for all eternity. Before that, at least in the British-administered Cape Colony and Natal, Africans had been able to buy land in the open market—a narrow but valued right. The Act of 1913 laid down that in future no African might purchase or even rent land anywhere except in certain scheduled areas: these areas were all defined as coming within Native Reserves already secured to the Africans by treaty rights or other legal enactment. At the same time a commission was appointed with the object of making 'further provision' of land for purchase by Africans—thereby recognizing that the Reserves were not, *even at that time*, large enough for African rural needs. Typically enough, this 'further pro-

vision' was never made until 1936, when the Smuts-Hertzog (Coalition) Government, introducing another and still more deliberate instalment of 'segregation' of non-white from white, provided that 7½ million morgen of land should eventually be made available for Africans and added to the existing Reserves.

To this unwonted 'generosity' the Nationalists point today with manifest pride and self-approval. And it is true that since 1936 over three million morgen have been added to the Reserves. Yet the new land has been usually the worst land; and some of it was already the home of an existing African population. Dr. Smit, a cautious authority, estimated lately that 'at the present rate of progress it will take twenty-five years to buy the balance of land promised to the natives in 1936'.¹⁹ The view that the natives 'occupy some of the best land' is in any case one of the many popular myths of white South Africa. In the Transkei, it is true, some of the land is good, or has been good. Elsewhere, it is often very bad indeed. Of the Native Reserves in the Northern Transvaal, Dr. Smit reported that they were 'situated mostly in dry bushveld country, which affords little opportunity for agriculture and stock-raising; and for the most part the natives are concentrated along the non-perennial streams, leading a precarious existence and obtaining water from pools in the river-beds. Before the coming of the Europeans however, there was a large congregation of natives in the fertile high-rainfall area of the Levubu River. . . .'

By 1951, accordingly, the condition of the Africans in rural areas had become bad almost beyond belief. The area of land scheduled for African occupation was no more than 9.6 per cent of the land surface of the Union in 1941, and would be no more than 12.4 per cent if all the promised land were now added to it. In this meagre corner of the country there must live some three million Africans: the density of population in the Reserves was estimated in 1936 (since when it will have increased) at 82 persons a square mile, compared with 21 for the Union as a whole.²⁰

Outside the Reserves there live another three million Africans on land owned by Europeans; while nearly as many more exist on sufferance in the towns. About two and a half million whites, or 20 to 25 per

THE COUNTRYSIDE

cent of the whole population, have prescriptive right to, or actual ownership of, more than 87 per cent of the land. And it is in these circumstances that earnest Afrikaans professors (followed by a yelping pack of the merely prejudiced) advocate total segregation at all levels, *apartheid*, of whites from non-whites. This means, if it means anything, that upwards of five million Africans must be moved, lock, stock, and barrel, from 'European' to 'African' areas; and their places filled by a corresponding white labour force. Needless to say, nothing remotely like this can or will take place.

Perhaps the best comment on the South African practice of segregation was made by Professor Z. K. Matthews, himself an African, in the American journal, *Foreign Affairs*, for October 1951. 'Experience has taught the non-Europeans,' he wrote, 'that when any such *deurmekaarboerdery* (intermingling) is to the advantage of the European, some plausible reason will be found for not interfering with it. Whenever abolition of it appears advantageous to the non-European, however, it is represented as a menace which cannot be tolerated.' The situation in South Africa, commented Professor Matthews, a studious and moderate man, 'is explosive'.

I was told on my travels, as I am sure that other travellers are told, that the whites of South Africa must at any rate protect themselves from the 'rising native flood'. Over many hospitable whiskeys and glasses of Kohlenberg, dread pictures were drawn of a small brave population of settlers gradually overwhelmed by sheer weight of black numbers. Just as the Boer trekkers had protected their women and children from the assegais of Xosa and Zulu with the sheer courage of their strong right arms, so today the descendants of the Boers must make sure that the hordes of Africa do not overcome and bear them down. Because the Africans, it is well known in South Africa, 'breed like flies' . . .

And again one is confronted with the ignorance among white South Africans of the basic facts about their own country. For this belief in 'the rising black flood' is one more myth among the sagas of the whites. There is no 'rising black flood' in South Africa; if anything, the tide is ebbing and the people are being drained away by disease and starvation.

APARTHEID

The figures are available in a number of Government Blue Books; and, as far as I know, they are not disputed. The Natives Laws Commission of 1948—more commonly known as the Fagan Commission, after its liberal-minded Afrikaner chairman—was only the last of a long line of official bodies to comment on this myth. 'The popular notion,' said the Commission, 'that the natives multiply more rapidly than other sections of the population is not borne out by the census returns.' Just what that rate of increase may really be is not exactly known, for the Africans of South Africa, being counted with the sheep and cattle, are burdened with no proper vital statistics. Their births and deaths go unrecorded except in their private joys and sorrows; and the census returns, accordingly, are no more than the periodical counting of unregistered heads. Yet the census returns are reasonably authoritative on this point of population increase. They show that the rate of increase for the Africans—even including a large immigration from British and other territories within and to the north of the Union—is proportionately no greater than the rate of increase of the other communities of South Africa. The Fagan Commission pointed out that in 1904 the census showed the Bantu as forming 68.79 per cent of the population, while the census in 1946 showed them as forming 68.52 per cent. 'The increase of the total population of the Union, including natives, in the ten years from 1936 to 1946 was 18.79 per cent, and that of the natives alone was 18.32 per cent.' The census of May 1951 confirmed these trends.

These figures conceal a story of African destitution. But they also show, quite conclusively, that the whites in South Africa have managed in one way or another to increase their numbers at the same rate as the Africans (and this also applies *vis-à-vis* the Euro-African, or Coloured, rate of increase). They are threatened by the 'black flood' no more than their grandfathers were: on the contrary, given their respective positions, they are threatened far less. They are not, as in Southern and Northern Rhodesia and in East Africa, a tiny fraction of the total population—they are a most substantial part of it, and their chances of survival, under existing conditions, are infinitely better than those of the Africans. Most whites of South Africa enjoy an exceedingly high stan-

THE COUNTRYSIDE

dard of living; most non-whites suffer from an exceedingly low one. And yet the average white man and woman in South Africa, so far as many chance conversations will show, believes fervently and even hysterically that he or she occupies a small island in the midst of a strongly rising tide. . . .

AFRICANS 'AT HOME'

TO discover why the Africans fail to thrive and multiply one must visit their Reserves, for it is there, at least in theory, that they ought above all to be doing so. Although the Africans cannot exactly 'live unto themselves' in their Reserves—since they command no genuine apparatus of self-government nor (with some rare and rickety exceptions) of industry and commerce, but are dependent fully on the whites—they can at least preserve some of the form and content of their own culture. They are not pestered, as in the white areas, with the need to carry a dozen different passes; they are not subjected to daily scorn and contempt, or badgered by the police; nor are they threatened by the constant danger of being told to assen.ble their few belongings and shift elsewhere.

I remember discussing this point in Umtata, the capital of the great Transkei Reserve, with Victor Mbobo. Having lived for long in Johannesburg, and being one of the rare Africans of the Union who have managed to go oversea, Mbobo ranks in white mythology as an 'agitator' or an 'intellectual'—one of the 'discontented ones' who are likely to 'mislead the mob'. As a matter of fact, Mbobo is an intellectual (without the inverted commas) but he is not, as far as I could see, at all discontented nor is he engaged in politics. He came to the Transkei quite recently to build up a lawyer's practice, and this is taking all his time.

It was nearly midday of a Sunday when we drove up to the house where Mbobo is living temporarily, until he finds a home for his family and himself, on the hills just outside the town. Now, for the ignorant European (I mean the man from Europe, since white South Africans often apply the term 'European' to themselves), it would seem a simple enough thing to drive up to another man's house on a Sunday morning,

THE COUNTRYSIDE

ring the bell, and state your business. In South Africa, however, it is not at all a simple thing, supposing that a white man be calling thus upon a non-white man. For the white caller is probably a policeman or an agent of the Government, with business that cannot in the nature of things be other than unpleasant, if not actually violent. There is consequently a certain atmosphere about such visits. Notably, a stillness falls upon the visited house. Nobody is at home, or not obviously so. A frightened child will be discovered somewhere in the yard: questioned, the child will stare with serious saucerlike eyes, pinioned by apprehension. Gradually all will understand that no unpleasantness or violence is intended; and the household will relax.

Mbobo, we discovered in the end, was still asleep; but messages were conveyed, and he appeared quite soon, a large, self-confident young man who took it in his stride that unknown whites should visit him on a Sunday morning. My companion had already met Mbobo, surprisingly enough in South Kensington; and soon we were chatting merrily about the London weather and other recondite matters. Although a native of the Trauskei—a Pondo—Mbobo could tell us little, for he had only lately returned after many years outside the Reserve. Life here, he found, was infinitely less irksome than among the whites: there were fewer opportunities for an energetic man to advance in his job, but there were also fewer chances of individual disaster. I gathered from what he said that the state of things in the Reserve could be described as one of more or less undisturbed stagnation.

We left Mbobo, who could tell us little, and travelled on through Mount Frere and Mount Ayliff to the borders of the Reserve at Umzimkulu in East Griqualand. We saw, as we travelled, what 'undisturbed stagnation' might really mean when set against the background of overcrowding of men and cattle. But already we had noted some of the many contrasts between a Reserve and 'a European area'. Even a novice, as I was, could soon tell the difference merely from looking at the landscape: this immediate and physical distinction is a measure of the gulf which separates the welfare of the whites from the deathlike posture of the non-whites.

We had come, a day or so before, down from Basutoland, a British

colony where the stagnation is almost as complete but is managed more humanely; and in doing so we had crossed some splendid tracts of country. In this part of the Union we had got right away from the grasslands of the Free State *veld*, from the umber and ochre wastes of the Karoo, and had come among high hills and sloping verdant pastures. Here, in the neighbourhood of the Drakensberg mountains, South Africa is beautiful in the classical sense of the word, beautiful in the smooth long brow of green misted hills, in the prospect of far-off purple ranges, in pools of pasture revealed abruptly at the bend of a corniche road, in pallid lifting clouds amid the cerulean sky. This journey round Basutoland, from Maseru on the west down through the Transkei into Natal and northward again across the dramatic rift of Oliviershoek to Harriemith in the Free State, is very fine.

The splendour of it began at once after we had left Maseru—a 'hill station' with its flag and its cluster of trim white buildings shaped much in the manner of Kipling—for you travel southward among remote and ranging hills that slope into grey-green valleys. These valleys are peopled with the lowland Basuto, who live in kraals of stone and thatch that are fenced with pale blue cactus; there is silence everywhere but there is also movement. Occasionally a man or a woman, blanketed as people always are in Basutoland, goes by in dignity on a mountain pony (only in Basutoland will you regularly see Africans on horseback); more often, the passers-by are groups of women on their way to work. You see few men going to work, because the best of the Basuto men of working age annually migrate to the Union. Here in the lowlands the British Administration has still to apply the soil conservation which has already done a great deal of good in the mountains; and erosion is as yet unchecked. Rain-tracks and cattle-tracks have eaten deep jagged gulfs, called *dongas*, into the dull red soil; from the steeper hillsides the torrents of summer have dragged away wide sheets of soil, so that the country has at times the sick and naked look of wrinkled yellow hide. Two or three generations ago, no more, this land was clothed in nourishing grass.

The little isolated hills, shaped each like a pointed breast and capped with a nipple of naked stone, continue on the right hand side of the road

down to the foothills of the Drakensberg, beyond Mohalieshoek: but on the left you are flanked by the first of the five great ranges of Basutoland. Mafeteng, the centre of the province of the present Paramount Chieftainess of Basutoland, lies within the shadow of this range. At Mafeteng we stopped for coffee in the middle of the morning. We found it at Mrs. Scott's house, a nicely sheltered cottage behind a high green hedge. Mrs. Scott is an elderly Scottish lady who speaks with the gentle accents of Fifeshire: it is thirty-six years since she first came to Mafeteng, but she lives here as if Basutoland were really an annex of the kingdom of Fife, and dispenses hospitality with the quiet matter-of-fact kindness of the people of that land. Mrs. Scott is one of a long line of kindly pastors and masters who have come to Basutoland since the Paris Evangelical Mission first sent the reverend father Casalis and others to found missions among the unknown and savage tribes of the great chief Moshesh, nearly twelve decades ago. 'It's quiet here,' she says. 'Och, I don't know that I'd change it for anywhere else.'

After Mohalieshoek, an hour or so from Mafeteng, we swung right and crossed the Caledon River back into the Free State; and thence to the backveld town of Zastron, where South Africa and all its implications come into their own again. Along the roadside at frequent intervals, now, there were crescent-shaped notices set on posts with the word *outspan* written on the crescent—the traditional camping sites for trek wagons; in the distance the hills of Basutoland and of the Drakensberg retreated within grey and blue shadows. The little group of men who pointed our way for us in Zastron looked to me like ordinary Afrikaner farmers, and they certainly spoke Afrikaans among themselves and a curiously limited English to us: but it seems that really they were the descendants of Lithuanian Jews who had settled in the country fifty years ago. There are many Jewish farmers in these parts: traditionally, it seems that they are little liked by the *ware Afrikaner*, but their habits and their treatment of the Africans appear to differ in no way from his.

Beyond Zastron the country became still wilder and more imposing. We crossed the narrow gulf of the Orange River, which rises in Basutoland, at the bridge of Mayaputi: not far from here, Reitz records, Smuts and his Commando crossed on their tremendous raid into the Cape

AFRICANS 'AT HOME'

Colony fifty years ago. The colour of the water is a deep chocolate, filching away the good soil of Basutoland and carrying it to the far Atlantic. Ramparts rimmed with umber sandstone lined our road. At the trader's store of Palmietfontein, where the road crosses the Telle River back into Basutoland, we turned uphill and climbed for miles along the gorge of the Telle to the memorable summit of Lundeans Nek, where a South African police post at eight thousand feet or so surveys the land on every side.

This was my first glimpse of a Native Reserve. The good land round Zastron is of course 'European': but between the Orange and the Telle there is squeezed, out of sight and mind of white civilization, a little Reserve composed almost exclusively of steep hills and eroded pasture. This is grim frowning country, sick with erosion, decaying in solitude. Stray groups of Hlubi and Tembu exist here. We saw them first at the store of Palmietfontein, pagans who wore shirts or blankets of vermillion stuff, the women often with a wide flat hat of a rich royal blue upon their heads: colours that matched well with the deep blue sky and the rust-red sandstone rocks. Many of these sandstone rocks, rimmed along the hills of the valley, were weatherworn into blurred gargoyle shapes, and looked from a distance like ancient temple facings whose identity the rain and wind had long destroyed. Gideon, our Zulu driver, identified the peoples that we passed: the Hlubi by their red and blue garments and their general look of gypsy-like abandonment, the Tembu by the wire bracelets on their arms, the Baxa by the scuffs down their faces. . . .

After the summit of Lundeans Nek, a splendid pass, the descent to the southward is slow and easy; and here at once we saw that this was 'European' land. The pasture was good; the land was fit for profitable farming. At intervals of every few miles we passed trim farmhouses and their outbuildings shielded behind little groves of blue gum and pine; in a short while we had come down into a broad basin of rich farming land that was lit like paradise with the glow of the sunset. From this basin we passed into a valley again and in darkness climbed the Barkly Pass; and on the other side of the Barkly Pass, falling away steeply, the road took us in a few miles to the town of Elliot.

THE COUNTRYSIDE

The first contrast, then, between 'European' and 'African' land was the nature of it: the one was rich and the other was poor, and both were so in the sense of natural formation. Another contrast awaited us in Elliot. This was the important matter of accommodation, one that we had first met in the neighbouring town of Barkly East. The hotels in 'European' areas, we found, were usually bad, being squalid, dirty, and unfit for decent living: those in the Reserves, by a surprising contrast, were always good. Does this mean that the Africans have better hotels than the whites? Not at all: the Africans almost never use hotels of any kind, for generally they are not allowed to. (In some of these white hotels, indeed, our Zulu driver would not have been given even food to eat; and in none of them was he given a bed fit to sleep in.) The explanation is otherwise: it lies in the fact that the hotels in the Native Reserves are intended to accommodate traders, officials, and other white visitors who desire to eat and sleep there, while the hotels in the white areas, as far as I could see, are designed purely and simply to serve drinks from dawn till dark. Making such steady profits from their bar trade, the hotel keepers bother little or not at all with their proper business of hotel keeping. The first hotel at which we stopped in a white area was a large imposing affair with a pillared portico and white-washed steps: it looked promising, but turned out to be no different from the rest. From the manager down to the smallest boy, the whole staff was congregated in the bar and the adjoining billiard room, and ten minutes or so were required to draw any sense out of them. Alcohol, it seems, adds a good deal to the savour of white civilization.

But it was after Elliot that we began to see the sharpest contrasts between the areas of white and of African settlement. From Elliot the road passes through some splendid country to Engcobo in the Transkei Reserve, the greatest Reserve of all; and the land remains good. Here the people are mostly pagan, though the missionaries have long since been at work: they retain many of their pagan customs, their rites and secular amusements, and their appearance. In the highlands beyond Elliot, one morning before breakfast, we came upon six men advancing towards us in a line, feathers and hatches waving after the manner of Fenimore Cooper, and with anklets of ostrich plumes upon their

leaping legs. They were on their way, Gideon opined, to a wedding; and heads would be broken before morning. They stopped their leaping and chanting until we were by, and then, our intrusion gone, began again. A little beyond, among the myriad huts of the Pondo, we passed an old woman with a retinue whose faces were piped white with clay; she was possibly an *isanuse*, or superior medicine-woman, who would practise divination for purposes of good rather than (as some of them do) for purposes of evil. Here and there the women were unclothed to the waist; this is never seen in non-pagan areas.

But the overwhelming impression was one of density of population. 'You could almost imagine,' someone said, 'that we were in a closely packed urban area.' The huts of the Pondo were spread about the plain in village groups seldom more than a mile or so apart; and what seemed like thousands were visible at any one time. The contrast with the white farming land beyond the Barkly Pass was immediate: there the farmer would practise extensive farming on five or ten thousand acres, while here the Pondo practises extensive farming on one acre or half an acre. No gardens: no vegetable plots: no pig-styes and chicken-pens—the Pondo practises extensive farming. He practises, that is, the farming of his ancestors, with the difference that his ancestors had all the world to practise it in, and he has only one acre or half an acre, or no acre at all.

In this there sits the kernel of the matter. 'Just look at the way the natives ruin the good land we have given them,' exclaims the impatient white man: 'Whatever's the good of giving them more to ruin?' The native, the white man holds, is too primitive to do better than ruin land, too stupid, too underdeveloped, too childish. Perhaps he may change: but only in the course of long generations. For how many generations, after all, has the white man required to build his civilization?

Setting aside all question of the white man's civilization, this argument must be said to be based on ignorance or dishonesty. The African ruins the land in his Reserves because he can do no other: he is appallingly overcrowded to begin with, but, apart even from that, he is caught in the rigours of a civilization which is utterly incapable of teaching him to help himself. For to break down the traditional farming

habits of the Pondo, for example, one would have to break down much of the pattern of tribal authority and superstition—but that, the white man says, would be wrong. Break down the tribal system—and what remains for the African but to claim a place within the white man's system? Besides, just think of the cost. . . . Since we must not do anything to break down the pattern of tribal authority and superstition—except, of course, by subjecting the African to all the worst influences of white civilization—we must leave him substantially as he is. We must leave him, that is, to starve. And leave him to starve white South Africa has accordingly done.

Malicious exaggeration? Not really. Every Government commission that has ever considered the condition of the Africans in the Reserves—and many commissions have considered it—has returned the same opinion: the condition is disastrous. The Act of 1913, it will be remembered, agreed by implication that the Reserves were not, even then, big enough to hold their population; extensions to the Reserves since 1936 have in no way kept pace with the natural growth of population.

Today the Reserves are in worse posture than ever. In 1936—to take a comparatively late starting-point—a White Paper on land policy could say of the Reserves that 'speaking generally', they were 'congested, denuded, overstocked, eroded, and for the most part in a deplorable condition'. Twelve years later the Assistant Director of Native Agriculture remarked of conditions in the Ciskei Reserve that: 'Over perhaps 10 per cent of the total area, the incidence of soil erosion may be described as slight; over 50 per cent as bad; over the balance, as nothing less than terrifying.'²¹ Another typical and authoritative opinion was that of the ninth report of the Social and Economic Planning Council, an official body, which called attention to 'the incapacity of the Native Reserves to provide even the minimum subsistence requirements under present conditions'. Professor Frankel has pointed out that while £112 millions were spent on agriculture by the Union Government in the period 1910-36, 'the amount made available directly for native agricultural needs was less than £750,000'.²² Add to this the fact that the Native Land and Trust Act of 1936 was designed partly to drive Africans away from white-owned land—to drive them,

that is, into the Reserves; and the fact that much of the land acquired for African occupation since 1936 was *already occupied by Africans*: and one begins to see why the Pondo and their fellow-tribes have failed to prosper.

They exist, indeed, in a state of living death. And once again the facts are not in dispute: they are merely ignored. White men who are content to say that no visitor could possibly 'understand' their country without a sojourn of twenty years or so are equally content, in the same breath, to say that the Native Reserves could be made to carry a much higher population than they do at present. Dr. Diederichs, the Nationalist ideologue, was one of several 'authorities' who patiently instructed me in this. Total segregation—*apartheid*—is practicable because the Reserves 'are not being properly exploited'. And yet, what are the facts? Sober investigators have found that total segregation of white from black would mean, in the Transvaal (where the call for total segregation is strongest), quadrupling the population of Reserves that are *already* impoverished and overcrowded.

'It should be obvious', modestly commented the Native Laws Commission in 1948, 'that no workable policy can be based on so impracticable a proposition.' In Natal the doctrinaires of *apartheid* look fondly on Zululand as the future home for all the Africans of Natal: and yet more than three-quarters of the Africans of that province reside today *outside* Zululand. (And in 1951, strange comment, there were white proposals to 'throw open more Crown land in Zululand for European settlement'.²³) In the Orange Free State, as high a proportion as 96 per cent of Africans live outside the meagre little Reserves of that province. Only in the Cape Province are things a little better from the standpoint of the *apartheid*-mongers, for there some 62 per cent of Africans still live in Reserves.

But what of these Africans who do live in Reserves? They are not, as we have seen, exactly comfortable. The Native Laws Commission noted two 'prime facts' about them: in the first place, that nearly 30 per cent of families are landless in spite of the fact that the average unit of arable land is sub-economic, and that at least 20 per cent of all arable land is not suitable for cultivation; and, secondly, that over

THE COUNTRYSIDE

60 per cent of families own five or less cattle, while 29 per cent own no cattle at all—in spite of the fact that the Reserves are already carrying *double* the number of stock that should be run if deterioration were not to take place.

For the Ciskei Reserve where conditions are especially bad, Mr. R. W. Norton, at one time Assistant Director of Agriculture, told the Commission that a cross-section of land registers showed that 'the average extent of arable land per landholder is 4·6 acres'. There were, however, 14,000 families without arable land. It was not possible to say, he thought, 'that the Agricultural Staff, over a period of twenty years, has succeeded in bringing about any computable increase in acreage yields', which were painfully low.

Even the Transkei Reserve, much vaunted for its 'better conditions', has no brighter story to relate. The Native Mine Wages Commission of 1944 took evidence from Dr. Rijno Smit, at that time Chief Medical Officer for the Transkeian Territories. Dr. Smit provided figures for seven districts which, he considered, represented a cross-section for the whole region. Basing his figures on the 1921 census returns, with a family computed at five persons, he found that 36 per cent of the families had five or more cattle, 20 per cent had five or less, while 44 per cent had no cattle at all; and this, he said, must be counted for various reasons a rather better picture than reality. Sixty per cent of families in the Transkei, accordingly, could be reckoned as deriving no more than negligible benefits from their stock, or no benefits of any kind: while 'the cattle are in addition for the greater part undernourished, stunted, sub-economic creatures, due to the present farcical method of farming'.

Another witness, dealing still with the Transkei, computed that in 1944 a selected group of 8,000 families with arable allotments had an income of seven shillings a family a month, while a group of 10,000 families without arable allotments had an average income of four shillings a family a month. A family, let me repeat, is reckoned as five persons. Both in the Transkei and the Ciskei (the two largest Reserves) the average yield of maize an acre was put at less than one and a half bags: in the Ciskei, it was said, the average family would get seven bags

of maize a year, whereas the 'normal requirements' were thirteen bags a year.

'In other words,' said this witness, and the point has much significance, 'it is erroneous to regard a Native Reserve as an agricultural area. It would be more accurate to speak of it as a well-spread-out residential area, where the average family unit makes no more out of his land than the average city dweller pottering around in the backyard garden.'

Just how true is this statement was confirmed once again by two investigators in the Ciskei, Houghton and Philcox, during a survey made in 1949. They found that 260 families in the Keiskama Hoek region of the Ciskei were spending over half their meagre income in buying food from local storekeepers. They compared their findings on family incomes with an analysis of traders' sales for the previous year; and the results are worth quoting:

| | <i>Family Expenditure</i> 1949 | <i>Traders' Sales</i> 1947-8 |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | <i>per cent</i> | <i>per cent</i> |
| Food | 57·6 | 50 |
| Clothing | 13·5 | 22 |
| Household Requisites | 8·4 | 18 |
| Other | 20·5 | |

Houghton and Philcox consider, furthermore, that the families in this area could be taken as typical in their circumstances for the whole Ciskei; and they point out, once again, that only wage remittances from men who have gone to work outside the Reserve save most of these people from immediate starvation.²⁴

Small wonder that the best that most of the people of the Reserves can hope for is slow rather than immediate starvation. That this is really their condition is shown by what is known about their health. Dr. Rijno

Smit told the Native Mine Wages Commission that over half of all African children in the Transkei died before they reached the age of sixteen. In 1940 and 1941 Dr. Mary Macgregor collected figures at the Umtata Health Unit which showed that 36·4 per cent of 1,426 children born alive died before the age of two years, and that 46·1 per cent died before the age of sixteen years. Another investigator, Fox, found that the mean death rate for African infants in the Transkei, Ciskei, and Basutoland, was 242 per 1,000 live births under the age of one year, 327 under the age of two years, and no less than 508 under the age of sixteen years. Surveys undertaken in the past decade—by Brock and Latsky in 1942, le Riche in 1943, Kark and le Riche in 1944, to mention only the more important—have disclosed the gravity of chronic malnutrition among African youth.²⁵ J. and T. Gillman concluded at the end of a long survey that they had ‘provided ample evidence that among a population malnourished for one or two generations, the adults already harbour such extensive lesions in many organs that chances of cure are at present remote. . . .’ What seems especially alarming about this situation is not only that the health of the Africans is undermined, but that the process of undermining shows no sign of coming to an end. The *state* of their health is bad: the *trend* is positively murderous. . . . And can one be sanctioned for using the term ‘murderous’ in this connexion? When white South Africa knows the facts, lives abundantly well itself, and yet does nothing serious to save the Africans?

Consider as an *envoi* to this unhappy subject the comments of J. and T. Gillman, two scientists who were certainly not concerned to exploit a case for sentimental reasons. They showed to what ravages of disease the young and the middle-aged African is subject; and they passed this judgment. ‘The last part of the African’s life-track,’ they wrote, ‘is too well-known to merit any further mention. There is premature senescence with all its usual accompaniments, such as mental disease, susceptibility to intercurrent infections, pneumonia, tuberculosis, arthero-sclerosis, and cardiovascular disease. All these events are enacted some ten to twenty years earlier in the African than in the European. . . .’

Here, at any rate, is one grim recipe for total segregation. The dead do not intrude.

INTO NATAL

ON a cool night full of stars we arrived in Umzimkulu, the 'Great Kraal', on the borders of Natal. The hotel here is built for tourists and falls outside the usual style of small country hotels, being quiet and comfortable (though even here the bar erupts a familiar rout of noisy alcoholics); the tourists, furthermore, are mostly the English from Natal, and expect a touch of the Old Country no matter what the cost. In Natalian towns like Richmond and Ixopo we were to pass 'inns' and houses decorated with 'half timbering' stuck to the façade: at Umzimkulu, just to remind us where we were, the lounge showed a large photograph of an armoured car labelled 'East Griqualand' and a portrait of Field-Marshal Sir John French. What the architecture lacks is more than made good by the vegetation: here at Umzimkulu the rust-red and scarlet poinsettia were coming into leafy bloom, and the whole garden was aflame with colour when I saw it through my window in the morning.

Scenically, Natal sleeps. If there be anywhere a land that flows with milk and honey, this is it 'You can very well understand,' someone said, but not unkindly, 'why the English would never let the Boers have Natal.' One has the impression here that everything grows simply for the planting: the air is laden with scents and sounds that suggest long easy growth, lushness, decay. The poinsettia were already out: the frangipani not yet, nor yet the jacaranda—but all would come in time, wreathing and writhing about the pseudo-Tudor villas and the portals of the Royal Agricultural Society of Natal, and making a jungle beside the narrow shadowed road. Tall slender gums were glinting in warm winter sunlight. Garden hoses whirled and sprayed.

From Pietermaritzburg we drove north-westward to the Mooi River: beyond Howick, we were once again within sight of the crested

THE COUNTRYSIDE

curtain of the Drakensberg which forms the eastern frontiers of Basutoland and falls in long steep cliffs to the Natalian foothills. For most of a hundred miles, this amazing curtain of the Drakensberg drops from the sky across the western landscape, and makes a noble sight. The African huts along the roadside now were Zulu huts: being a feckless lot who seem to treasure in their history nothing but their military tradition, the Zulu have never bothered to learn the art of building permanent huts. Unlike the strong stone huts of the Basuto, or the decorated stone and plaster huts of the Pondo, those of the Zulu are sorry little beehives of thatch and mud.

Beyond Estcourt and Winterton we came to Bergville, ugly little towns, and stopped for lunch, being now within easy sight of the cliffs of the Drakensberg. Not far from here there lies a National Park that is formed by a splendid arena of cliffs, but this we passed by, being anxious to get into Harrismith before the courthouse closed for the evening; and climbed steadily to the summit of the pass of Oliviershoek, a place of much military significance during the Boer War and, still earlier, the solitary gap in the hills through which the Boer trekkers, coming from the High Veld, first glimpsed the wonders of north Natal.

The town named after Governor Sir Harry Smith—whose wife of legendary charm and beauty gave a name to Ladysmith—returned us quickly from the admiration of the scenery to the full rigours of the Problem. Harrismith, at our coming (and for months before and after), was the scene of the Witzieshoek Trial; and the Witzieshoek Trial provided, with a wealth of dramatic detail, an object lesson on the state of the Union that was, and is, of great importance.

If you drive due south from Harrismith, and steeply uphill, you are soon within the shadow of the Drakensberg peaks. If you then abandon your car, and take to your legs, you can scramble up to basins of sunny pasture cradled amid these summits. These basins are the 'sponges' which absorb, hold, and distribute rainfall to all the streams and rivers of the neighbourhood—on the south to Basutoland and on the north to the Witzieshoek Native Reserve and to the wide white farming lands which adjoin it. If the 'sponges' are stamped and squeezed dry by insistent cattle grazing, the streams and rivers will trickle and stop, and

the land will die. For several generations the Basuto people of the Witziesshoek Reserve (just over the Union border from Basutoland itself) have grazed their cattle on these upland 'sponges'; and, it is said, there is now an urgent need of conservation. Not long ago, accordingly, the officials of the Native Affairs Department (as the South African white administration of the Reserves is known) insisted that the Basuto move their cattle down from these 'sponges'. The Basuto pointed out that they had no other place to graze their cattle, and were promised that more land should be added to the Reserve in compensation for the 'sponges'. But it soon became clear that the administration, no matter how honourable its intentions, would not be able to purchase more land, because all the possible land was owned by white farmers, and the white farmers would not sell it for African occupation. Many of these farmers, it became clear, sadly begrudged the accident by which these Basuto had come into possession of such abnormally good land; they had got it, long decades before, because their chief at that time had sided with the Boers against the Basuto of Moshesh.

Being thus deprived of their best grazing land, and seeing no prospect of getting any other, the Basuto of Witziesshoek, a sturdy self-confident crowd, protested by breaking down the conservation fences and generally making it plain that they were not to be had that way. The police thereupon came up in force, heavily armed; and, to cut a long story short, 'troubles' occurred in which fourteen Africans were shot dead and others wounded, and two South African policemen were also killed. The official Commission, in its report, makes it perfectly plain that these Basuto felt themselves to have been misled, deceived, and badly treated. They burned under a lively sense of grievance; and the arrival in their midst of a threatening band of armed police—given the reputation of the South African police—was evidently enough to provoke violence.²⁶

The Commission of inquiry, interestingly enough, decided in spite of its strongly Nationalist composition to recommend 'that the available arable land of Witziesshoek be supplemented by a further 5,000 morgen (about 11,000 acres) of arable land by the purchase of land to the east and north-east of the Reserve'. Whereupon the local farmers'

THE COUNTRYSIDE

association of Harrismith sent forthwith a deputation to the Minister of Native Affairs to 'recommend the removal of all native residents from the Witzieshoek Native Reserve'. All farmers living on the border of the Reserve were represented by this deputation, which took with it a resolution by these farmers to the effect that they viewed 'with grave disquietude and alarm the recommendations made by the commission of inquiry, particularly the one recommending the extension of the Reserve and the buying of extra ground'.²⁷

There, in a nutshell, is the hopelessness of the thing. The chairman of the Commission of inquiry was a well-known Nationalist of Johannesburg: yet even he found it necessary to advocate extending the Reserve. But the farmers of the region, the kind of people who form the core of the Nationalist Party, were adamant that no new land was to be given to Witzieshoek; and, since the land is theirs by law, it is obvious that only expropriation will get it from them. But for the Nationalist Party to pass such legislation would be asking a stone to give forth blood. The Nationalist Party, no matter how hard it may at times try to overcome its difficulties, is caught within a contradiction that is too strong for it.

The story has been repeated many times, and not only under Nationalist Governments. Smuts and the United Party were just as contradictory in their dealing with the Africans. In the Northern Transvaal, for example, the fertile area along the Levubu River had originally supported a large African population which was, in time, dispossessed by the Boers. This area the Act of 1936 put upon the list of territories that were to be 'released' for African occupation, but, to quote Dr. Smit in the House of Assembly, 'after that Act was passed it was represented to the Government . . . that enormous development had taken place [by white farmers], and it was no longer practicable to hand over the area for native settlement'. No good land, that is, for Africans.

The case of Mamothola's Location on the slopes of the Drakensberg is another example of this suicidal contradiction between common sense—not to speak of common humanity—and the selfishness of white farmers. Dr. Smit, a careful man, described it as 'the most graphic illustration of erosion and the danger to river sources that I have ever seen'. There, he pointed out, 'you have a population of 6,000 natives

settled on the steep slopes of the Drakensberg immediately above the Letsitela River . . . that waters one of the richest valleys in the Union. But its flow is being seriously threatened. The removal of the natives from that area is essential.' Very well. But, asked Dr. Smit, 'where are they to go?'²⁸

Being incapable of a rational answer to these difficulties, the Nationalists (and in its time, it is fair to add, the United Party also) have regular recourse to an irrational answer. They possess the means of coercion; and they use it. For any honest man, no matter (as the Commission of inquiry showed) of what political colour, it is obvious that the Basuto of Witzieshoek cannot be deprived of their best land without compensating them with other land elsewhere. For it is not as if these Basuto were living large and free. In a mountainous region of some 31,000 acres there are about 14,000 of them: few families have as much as two or three acres of their own, apart from the cherished right of common grazing on the rich mountain tops. They count themselves well enough off: and yet they are a poor and thrifty people. To take from them the little they have got is to condemn them to something like destitution.

Yet white South Africa seems able to ignore these very obvious things. Having gone about the matter in such a way as to lead to trouble, the Government happily proceeds to wield the big stick. *Und bist Du nicht willig, so brauch' ich Gewalt*. . . . As many of the culprits as can be found are arrested. For weeks police scour the Reserve. And a great trial takes place . . . this trial is to be the longest in the records of the Union. . . .

It is not possible yet to comment on this trial. Most of the hundred-odd accused were given various forms of punishment when the trial ended late in 1951; some of the convicted were then anxious to have their case considered by the Appeal Court at Bloemfontein. But much interesting evidence can be found in the report of the Commission of Inquiry. This report is a telling illustration of the honest and hard-working way in which many capable South Africans try to solve their racial problems—under conditions which make these problems insoluble. 'The Commission seriously considered evidence . . . that it

THE COUNTRYSIDE

would be in the interests of the Union to remove all the Natives from Witzieshoek as a whole. . . . The Commission considers that if this solution were practicable, it would be ideal. . . . The difficulties involved in such a step are so great, however, that the Commission is reluctant to make such a recommendation.' There was, as everyone knew, no other land available: the 'ideal solution' was utterly impossible.

This trial offered illuminating evidence on the position of chiefs today. To make their protest, a great majority of the tribe—in spite of the fact that the Basuto retain great traditional allegiance to their chiefs—had defied not only the administration but also their senior chief, and were being led in their protest by one of their secondary chiefs. They preferred, that is, their own direct economic interest above the ties of tribal loyalty. It is an instructive example of the way in which the tribal system in South Africa has decayed: and this decay is probably the greatest benefit that the Africans of the Union have derived, no matter how back-handedly, from the system under which they suffer. Since the tribal system can no longer protect or uphold them, no doubt the sooner they shake themselves free of it the better. And at present, as the case at Witzieshoek reveals, they are shaking themselves free at a great rate.

How could it be otherwise? Many South African doctrinaires, such as Dr. Diederichs, hold that the Africans must be kept within their tribal system, for only thus will they retain their 'health and dignity'. And yet these same doctrinaires have done their best to destroy this system. The Native Administration Act of 1927 extended from Natal to the whole Union the powers which make the Governor-General (that is, in practice, the Government of the Union) the Supreme Chief of all Africans. These powers were necessary and convenient in cases where chiefs proved awkward and given to resistance. It is under comparable powers that the British Government deposes and banishes chiefs such as Seretse Khama and Tshekedi Khama in Bechuanaland.

But they make a nonsense of the tribal hierarchy. Thus in 1949 the Union Government had no scruples in deposing the Paramount Chief of the Venda tribe of the Northern Transvaal, although this man was among the most powerful of African chiefs in terms of popular alle-

giance. The Basuto of Witzieshoek (and the case is not unique) now turn this weapon to their own defence: if the Government can ignore their Paramount Chief when it suits the Government, then when it suits them so can they. In doing this, they take a long step towards the modern world.

The other point bears in the same direction. What was notable about these Basuto was their quiet determination not to be put down without a struggle. They made no dramatic speeches; they urged no revolution; they lusted after no sharpening of knives; but they remained of a mind to resist. And this mind to resist seems to grow notably though quietly in many parts of South Africa. It becomes manifest here and there in isolated strikes or protests or demonstrations; it takes various forms from talk to action; it grows, submerged and often silent and in ways the white man may probably not see or understand, and it grows steadily. One of these days, perhaps without further warning, this mind to resist will break forth, and white South Africa will be faced with the crisis it has always feared but never done anything constructive to avert—the outbreak of African resistance, passive or not passive, from one end of the country to the other. No doubt a minority of whites see this quite clearly, and tremble for their future; but the majority continue, helpless in their deep racial prejudice, to believe that they will somehow muddle through—and still retain their mastery and their wealth.

TO THE CITY OF GOLI

SOUTH AFRICA thus attains, in these years that mark the fifth decade of Union, a point in growth beyond which the old system will no longer work. Signs of crisis break in many places through the fabric of racial oppression, and cannot be ignored or explained away. The wheel of Rhodes's policy, of Kruger's policy (for both were aspects of the same attitude), has come full circle. Practising their own imperialism at home, the Boers took the land and made the Bantu their helots: they used land and people without regard for the welfare of either, without a thought for what the future might really hold. The mining *Uitlanders* with the Imperial Government at their back, the Rhodeses and Robinsons and Milners, took the subsoil in the same spirit as the Boers took the land, and in the same spirit subdued the Bantu to conditions of near-slave labour. Both applied to land and people the same rules of ruthless and primitive exploitation—ruthless and primitive precisely because neither sought to give back even a tithe of what they took out. Both have combined together—and most typically in the figure of Jan Smuts—to ravage and ruin the land and the people. The 'probing fingers' of the Karoo and the Kalahari, the wasted streams and rivers, the hills deprived of soil—these are realities in South Africa today no less than the rotting health of so much of the population.

It will help little merely to say this, for the conditions of imperialist exploitation were the conditions of history: but it will help even less to pretend that the truth is otherwise, or to mask the truth behind high-sounding phrases on the nature of white civilization and the white man's mission. 'Everywhere do I perceive,' wrote Sir Thomas More in his day, 'a certain conspiracy of rich men seeking their own advantage under the same and pretext of the commonwealth.'²⁹ The South African practice of 'imperialism within one's own country' has used

TO THE CITY OF GOLD

many names and pretexts to conceal its feckless rapacity: but the time has come when names and pretexts pall and fade before the consequences. J. A. Hobson had remarkable foresight when he wrote that the 'new imperialism' of South Africa would forge its own path in life. 'The absorbing aim (of the big business "politicians, financiers, and adventurers" of South Africa) will be to relegate British Imperialism to what they conceive to be its proper place, that of an *ultima ratio* to stand in the far background while colonial Imperialism manages the business and takes the profits. A South African federation of self-governing States will demand a political career of its own, and will insist upon its own brand of Empire, not that of the British Government, in the control of the lower races in South Africa.'³⁰ And so it has been: the dynamics of the 'new imperialism' have done their work, and the 'English' as much as the 'Dutch' (as the history of the United Party abundantly confirms) have waded with both feet into their own peculiar kind of exploitation, producing between them a situation which offends today not only the enlightened opinion of the world, but even the conservative opinion of white minorities in other territories of mixed population. Members even of the highly racialist Electors' Union of Kenya, thoughtfully seeking to remove the mote from their brothers' eye, have expressed to me their horror at the explosive possibilities induced by white policy in South Africa. 'That is a situation,' they have said, 'which we in *our* territory must avoid at all costs.'

It is against this background of crisis that the latest conflicts between English and Afrikaner have emerged. Just because matters have now reached the point where, if South Africa is to continue to grow rather than die, new rights and openings must be given to the non-white, the issue of 'white domination' has become of daily and individual significance. At this point of development the United Party, the great party of the non-Nationalists, has had no policy to offer but the mixture as before—and the mixture as before, as the events of the war years in South Africa suggested, simply will not do. In a world of collapsing empires, the Africans were entering industry, flocking into the towns . . . where could that end but in disaster to white supremacy? Eagerly outbidding the United Party, the Nationalists came forward with their

promise of *apartheid*, of total racial segregation at all levels, and this was a promise to solve things by magic: but such are the depths of prejudice in white South Africa that for many the magic seemed potent enough. By *apartheid* the non-whites would be enabled to develop—as every serious man or woman in South Africa, no matter how much he or she might dislike it, could see that they must and would develop—but they should develop in such a manner as in no way to threaten the absolute supremacy of the whites. And on the policy of *apartheid*—the saving of absolute white supremacy in the face of all the facts that it could not be saved without national suicide—the Nationalists came to power.

For this notion of absolute white supremacy has imprisoned the majority of white men and women in the Union to the point that they seem unable to conceive that it must end. Dr. E. G. Malherbe, an Afrikaner who is today the Principal of the University of Natal, refers somewhere in his writings to 'the business man who sits at his office desk and rings the bell for Jim Fish, who is working in the yard, to bring his spectacles, which lie just beyond his reach on the desk; and the wife, who, while sewing, drops her thimble, and halloes in shrill tones for the little piccanin on the other side of the house to come and pick it up at her feet.' That is a picture which is possibly no longer true of the Union: yet the essence of it has scarcely changed. People who live within the emotional superstructure of what is ideologically a slave society seem capable of looking at everything except reality.

Even so, reality intrudes. In these last few years, reality has taken white South Africa by the heels, and shaken it badly. It was from this shaking that there developed the panic vote which enabled the Nationalists, talking *apartheid*, to gain their victory in 1948. This panic has taken effect in many laws for racial discrimination which have made matters much worse than before: even so, reality still intrudes. The less prejudiced heads in the community begin to see that they are digging a pit for themselves. The whole doctrine of a docile, sufficiently segregated, black labour force is in grave danger of collapse. Such is the condition of the Reserves, and of the people within them, that remedial measures must be undertaken if the supply of cheap migrant labour is not gradually to dry up altogether. That is one reason why the Nation-

alists appointed a commission to examine the possibilities of economic development in the Reserves, and why they dare not allow their doctrine of 'African development in African areas' to remain an entirely dead letter. It was one reason why the United Party, had it stayed in power, might well have implemented some of the more helpful recommendations of the Native Laws Commission of 1948. 'The amelioration of the condition of the Reserves,' commented the Native Mines Wages Commission of 1943, 'is demanded'—as well as for the other and more obvious reasons—'in the interests of the gold-mining industry.'

But such amelioration in the Reserves will not really solve anything: if South Africa is to expand its new industries, new supplies of African labour must be made available in the towns—and this labour will not be migrant labour, nor can it be allowed to starve. As one sees especially in Johannesburg and other large towns, the Nationalists pursue at one and the same time a policy of segregation and a policy of integration. They are caught in their contradiction, and know no way of escaping but with wild and dangerous strokes at windmills.

Seeing well that they have no future in the Reserves but slow starvation, the Africans with a universal impulse flock into the towns. And they flock into the towns of the Union—passes and policemen notwithstanding—from all parts of central and southern Africa. They come, if they can, from far Nyasaland and Tanganyika; from Southern and Northern Rhodesia; from all the British, Belgian, and Portuguese colonies and protectorates. Nothing is more impressive in Africa than this steady padding stream of migrants to the Union, heading doggedly away from rural destitution towards the towns, and towards the Rand above all. Yet nowhere in the Continent is racial discrimination more obvious and regular than on the Rand. Increasingly, these immigrants find permanent employment in industry: but their white employers, with an ambivalence of outlook that is truly remarkable, are still in many cases capable of execrating their presence.

It is this drift to the towns, with the concomitant growth of industry, which provides the great lever of social and economic change that is working now to lift South Africa out of its racial deadlock, and offers the most significant comment on the whole situation. Industrialization

THE COUNTRYSIDE

is in the way of saving the Africans of South Africa from gradual extinction: it may even be in the way of saving the chances for a peaceful co-existence of the peoples in this country. That the process is taking place under a Nationalist Government may be for many a matter for regret: the fact remains, oddly enough, that it was the Nationalists as a party who gave the first great stimulus to the industrial revolution in South Africa. The United Party wanted it not: for the United Party was the party of the great extractive industries, and cared at bottom only for a continued supply of cheap labour for the mines. The Boer farmers wanted it not—until slump taught them that their sons and daughters either must become industrial workers or must hang about the countryside as 'poor whites'. If the Nationalists were logical, no doubt, they would suffocate every effort towards industrialization and would desire the full colonial status of 'assured market for British manufactured goods'. In that way they might most effectively obstruct the 'drift to the towns', and the consequent mingling of white and non-white, for the towns would have no jobs to offer. But Afrikaner nationalism—and the very proper desire to give their surplus sons and daughters the chance of making good—has prevailed over logic. While talking bravely of 'white civilization', the Nationalists in their policy of industrial development now prepare the way for black civilization.

The drift to the towns has affected, and affects, both white and non-white. Between 1921 and 1946, for example, the proportion of whites in the whole rural population diminished from 44·22 per cent to 27·54 per cent, or by about two-fifths—a fact of some importance when one comes to consider the mental habits of most white industrial workers. In the same period the proportion of Africans in the whole rural population diminished from 87·50 per cent to 77·01 per cent, or by about two-seventeenths. That puts the 'drift' in its proper light. But the absolute figures are more impressive. In 1921 there were only 587,000 Africans in urban areas (847,508 whites): in 1946 the number of urbanized Africans had risen to 1,719,312 (1,794,312 whites); and the movement since 1946 has been even more remarkable.³¹

Having looked at the countryside, then, it is necessary to follow the African into the towns, and see what happens to him there. It is just as

TO THE CITY OF GOLI

necessary to see what happens to the sons and daughters of the *platteland*—of the fertile grasslands—who, saved by the growth of industry from 'poor white-ism', have flocked into the towns in proportionately still greater numbers. For between them they hold in their hands the saving—or the sinking—of a plural society in South Africa. Having passed (and the phrase applies not only to the Bantu but also to these sons and daughters of the *platteland*) from 'barbarism to pauperism', they pass now from pauperism to industrialism. Will they get there in time? Or will their prejudices trip them up? The race between the processes making for chaos and the processes making for industrial revolution—with all its social and political meaning—is likely to be a narrow one. It lends South Africa a sense of speed and drama which excites the inhabitants, even while it frightens them. It accounts in large part for that sense of climax which quickens the social atmosphere in South Africa today: for the impression that this country gives of speeding towards some great change in its destiny. Like the great Zambezi where it suddenly accelerates above the Falls, South Africa shakes itself from lethargy. . . .

But whatever may come next, one thing now appears certain: the period of what might be called 'primary imperialism', with all its reckless handling of land and people, its slaveries and servitudes, its anchorage in the past, its self-frustrating blindness, has nearly run its term; and the period of industrial revolution, of industrial capitalism, begins. New chances for racial integration, however cruelly framed, present themselves. Limping, scarred, badly mauled, but with determination and even here and there with hope, South African stumbles into the world of modern industrial relations.

From Witziesshoek, accordingly, where the mountains sleep in rural solitude, where the Africans starve and the children of the Trekkers remember only the Trek, across the umber veld to the parent of the Union of South Africa. To the great and grim city of Goli, the city of gold. To the Witwatersrand. To Johannesburg.

PART TWO

THE TOWNS

‘LOCATION’

BEFORE plunging into the din and riot of Johannesburg, I am going to take you, with Abraham, briefly round the location or ‘native village’ of Bloemfontein. Africans, after all, have been living for a long time alongside the white man in the white man’s towns: the urban white man has needed his hewers of wood and drawers of water no less than the rural white man. De Kiewiet, who is reliable in these matters, says that in 1904 13·4 per cent of the African population was urban, and that by 1936 (or before the latest industrial expansion) this proportion had risen to 29·4 per cent. An essential part of the background to the drama of Johannesburg is formed by the conditions under which these urbanized Africans have lived, and still live.

Abraham is a well-informed if prejudiced guide. He is not a ‘tribal native’. His ancestors came as servants with the earliest Trekkers to enter what was later to become the Orange River Sovereignty, and to found its capital of Bloemfontein. I met him through the kindness of an Afrikaner friend in that trim city, a liberal-minded man who is among the best of that small but valuable minority of Afrikaners who resist the racial prejudice of their fellows. This liberal-minded man said that I ought to look at their location—which is considered to be one of the best locations in the Union—and that to do this properly I should go with Abraham. Since there is nowhere in South Africa for a white man and a black man to meet casually on equal terms—or for the most part on any terms—my Afrikaner friend lent me his office for a rendezvous, risking thereby the obloquy and scorn of most of his fellow-citizens.

I want to emphasize that this ‘native village’ of Bloemfontein is generally agreed to be among the best locations in the Union. It is certainly true that other locations I inspected in provincial towns such as Harrismith were much below the standard here. It is far better, for

instance, than that of the location at Brits, 'where the people can only get water three times a week from a stream that runs past the location', since the stream is opened to irrigate the town land only on those days.³² What is more, this location is well concealed outside the town behind a screen of trees. For the visiting eye there is thus avoided the painful ocular contrast between the solid prosperity of the white town and its inevitable neighbouring slum, the non-white location. In general, all 'urban natives' sleep in locations, with the exception of single domestic servants, who may not, generally, live with their husbands or wives on white premises.

'The majority of such locations', according to the Native Laws Commission of 1948, 'are a menace to the health of the inhabitants, and indirectly to the health of those in the towns . . . with few exceptions they [the dwellings] are a disgrace, and the majority are quite unfit for human habitation. . . . Speaking generally, the dwellings are mere shanties, often nothing more than hovels, constructed of bits of old packing-case lining, flattened kerosene tins, sacking, and other scraps and odds and ends . . . dark and dirty, generally encumbered with unclean and useless rubbish, mud floors are the rule, often below the ground level . . . one could hardly imagine more suitable conditions for the spread of tuberculosis. . . .' When I came at last to the great City of Goli, and looked up the health statistics, I found that the Commission's imagination was in no way at fault. Tuberculosis is raking 'urban natives' into the arms of death with long voracious sweeps.

Abraham took me first to the crèche at one end of this location. It is one of the rare crèches that are available for African mothers in South Africa, and was founded in memory of an Afrikaner lady, Susanna Ollemans. Bloemfontein is proud of it; and, in the circumstances, rightly so. The nurse in charge of the crèche, a nice fat African woman, told me she was feeding every day about 250 children between the ages of nine months and just under seven years, looking after them from six in the morning until seven at night. They are given their meals in pleasant rooms that are pleasantly painted in nursery-school style; they play about and look quite happy.

'It's not bad, Abraham?'

‘LOCATION’

‘No, it’s not bad, and we’re grateful for it. But just look a bit closer, will you. Then you’ll see why this sort of charitable enterprise, though it is useful, just doesn’t work. They begin a thing—perhaps for show, perhaps because they’ve got a bad conscience—but they never carry it through . . .’ (*They* in South Africa is a word of pregnant meaning: the whites use it of the non-whites and the non-whites of the whites, and it carries with it a whole arcana of unpleasant implications.)

Abraham bustled about in his quiet way, moving with the self-assurance of a man who has always lived and watched the whites at close quarters and knows their ways at the going up and the going down of the sun and through all the hours between.

‘Have you any medical attention here?’ he asked one of the African girls.

No, they hadn’t any medical attention. The health visitor came every now and then. . . .

‘Then the children have no medical examination when they come here?’

No, they didn’t . . .

‘All right,’ Abraham said to me. ‘That’s the first little lesson for you. This location is rife with disease—but the children come together in this crèche without more than the most irregular and superficial of medical examination or care . . .’ In a nicely fitted washroom he plucked at towels hanging close together: ‘They wipe their faces, their eyes, their noses, on common towels. . . .’ Not even a ‘medical cupboard’ was to be found in this crèche.

Even so, it will be well to remember that many English mothers would be exceedingly glad to be able to send their babies to a place as warm and clean and comfortable as this crèche is. With all its faults, its lack of toys, its haphazardness, in all the circumstances this crèche does credit to South Africa.

‘Where’s your earnings book?’ asked Abraham, who was not of this opinion.

We looked at the ‘earnings book’, where every woman who leaves her child in this crèche must enter, as a Means Test, the *joint monthly earnings* of her husband and herself. The first six women I noted were all

THE TOWNS

washerwomen: the joint monthly earnings of their husbands and themselves were severally 35s., 45s., 25s., 55s., and 40s.; or an average of £2 4s. 2d. a month. No doubt there will be a certain concealment of income in some of these figures (though most of them would be capable of checking through employers); but official statistics generally confirm this level of wages for non-industrialized 'urban natives'. One woman, indeed, had given the figure of £10 10s. for her husband and herself; but she was a rare exception. The average was that of the first six I have listed.

There are twelve schools in this location. I stopped at one of them for a talk with the headmaster, who said that there were more children out of school than in school. For 700 children, ranging from seven to seventeen, he has fourteen masters, including himself. He wants to introduce the double-shift system—one lot in the morning and another in the afternoon—because he finds that nearly all parents are eager for their kids to go to school; but lack of staff prevents him.

'Do you feed them?'

'Oh yes, we have regular school meals.'

'Four hundred of my children,' adds the headmaster, 'are entitled to one school meal a day. The older three hundred children are not.'

'And what does it consist of, this meal?'

'Well, it mustn't cost more than a penny—ha'penny a child. It used to be more, but the Government has reduced it. The Government says that our African children don't need to eat as much as the white children, because they lie about in the sun and get vitamins from heaven.'

'Don't white children lie about in the sun?'

'Sir,' said the headmaster, 'you are a white man. You must answer that for yourself. But perhaps,' he added, glancing quickly to see if I would mind, 'it isn't under heaven that the white children lie.'

We looked at the kitchen of this school, and found it a dusty shack without any water supply or proper means of cooking. Two or three African women were busy handing out the daily penny—ha'penny-worth: it consisted of a small plate of warmed-up vegetable soup, taken from two-gallon cans, and a small chunk of bread for each child. The kids were given this meal at the door of the shack, and wandered off

‘LOCATION’

into the dust and muck to eat it. But the African women gave them this food with an eager conscientious care as if it were the most important thing in the world; and perhaps, for them, it was.

‘Psychology’ plays a great part in white South Africa. It appeared at a high intellectual level during the debate on school meals which took place in Bloemfontein, at the annual congress of the Nationalist Party of the Orange Free State, some weeks after the visit I am describing. ‘Delegates said that European school feeding schemes tended to undermine the morale of the people, and native school feeding constituted a financial burden which the Union’s small white population could not continue to carry.’ The congress, accordingly, voted against the principle of school feeding, after a debate on a motion which asked the Government to abolish immediately school feeding for children, and to replace European school feeding by a system of family allowances.³³

Only a few days earlier, a report by the Commission of Inquiry into School Feeding had published some nasty figures on under-nourishment, but had come to the strange conclusion that what was needed was, ‘above all, educating the parents for their task within the household’. Strange conclusion indeed, because the Commission had found that a total of 896 African schools had been forced out of the school-feeding scheme when, in 1949–50, their subsidy had been reduced to 1½d. a child a day: that African schools on farms were excluded from the scheme; and that the Government refused to pay for labour involved in providing these school meals. All African children over the age of fourteen, moreover, are excluded from the scheme; and no African school which did not participate in the scheme before April 1, 1949, could join it.

Heads of schools and medical officers told the Commission of widespread under-nourishment of both white and non-white children. Under-nourishment of white children was estimated by the Commission to be present in 27·4 per cent of the areas investigated, of African children in 65·3 per cent of the areas, of Coloured children in 44·8 per cent, and of Indian children in 85·6 per cent. ‘All the available data,’ commented the Commission’s report, ‘point to the fact that the extent of under-nourishment in the Union is of such a nature that comprehen-

sive and active steps should be taken to raise the nutritional standard of the population.' Despite the beggarly condition of the vast majority of non-whites (and the poverty of an important minority of whites), the Commission still felt it must insist on a contribution by the parents to the cost of school meals, since school feeding might be morally wrong in that it could lead to the 'undermining of the parental sense of duty'. That it might be morally still more wrong to starve huge numbers of children was a point which the Commission failed to pronounce upon.

The Chief Medical Officer of Transvaal schools, Dr. J. C. Coetzee, had quite another opinion about the matter. In a memorandum to the Commission he asserted his belief that school feeding for natives was not necessary, because native children slept better than white children. Native children were acclimatized: white children were not. If native children show signs of advanced undernourishment, if half of them die before they reach the age of sixteen, if the other half reach maturity with an expectation of life that no insurance company would regard as anything but poor—all this, it seems, is because the children stay up too late at nights. Let them sleep more. Another witness, Mr. H. S. van der Walt, Under-Secretary of the Union Education Department, offered some interesting figures. At present the school-feeding scheme cost £1,170,000 a year. Not all schools were included in the scheme, but 32 per cent of all African children between the ages of seven and sixteen were attending school. 'When all native children eventually attend school, £4,062,500 will be required for school feeding. This stage will not be reached in the next fifty years, however.'

Most of the houses in the location were better than the usual run in South Africa, though some of them were in a bad state of disrepair. There is no lighting or private water supply, no tarred road; sanitation is on the 'bucket system'—urine and excrement being regularly lifted in buckets, that is, and carried away outside. The rent of a 'house' is 10s. a month, or about a fifth of the average joint earnings of husband and wife; but each child over eighteen is charged an additional rent of 3s. 6d., ostensibly to prevent overcrowding and because, after all, the

LOCATION

child will presumably be earning something. Much the same rule was applied, one recalls, to the British unemployed twenty years ago, and with the same cold inhumanity.

The single clinic of the location was also a good deal better than others I saw elsewhere. It is staffed with eight nurses, of whom five are qualified midwives; and the Assistant Medical Officer of Health attends from Bloemfontein for an hour or so every morning. At need an ambulance can be obtained by asking Bloemfontein; there is none in the location. There is also a number of private doctors who serve the location's needs—at a price they fix themselves. Each visit to this clinic costs the patient 3s. 6d. Nursing mothers are provided with dried milk at a cost of sixpence a pound a week. Few of them, however, seem able to afford this.

Transport over the two or three miles to Bloemfontein, where nearly all the people work, is provided by a municipal bus service. Although this is apparently the only municipal bus service which is sufficiently patronized to pay, none of the drivers is allowed to be an African.

In the sacred name of *apartheid*, the Nationalists have lately graced this location with a wholesale auction market, newly built by the municipality at the cost of £2,000. It is supposed to open every morning: at eleven o'clock on the day I was there the place was shut and empty, and had been so, I understood, for two days. Most of the little African retailers still obtain their goods from white traders, for the sufficient reason that *apartheid* is so arranged as to prevent the non-white traders from obtaining more than a trickle of inferior goods.

'Come and look at the Social Centre,' Abraham said, determined that I should miss nothing. This is a large bungalow with a big central room and four smaller rooms. According to the foundation stone, it was erected in 1926 *To the Glory of God and the Social and Spiritual Welfare of the Bantu*. Mr. Sofothelo, the director, informed me that he had about 250 members of both sexes (in an adult population of many thousands where no other social facilities exist) who pay ten shillings a year for membership. A notice on Mr. Sofothelo's blackboard stated that: 'Subscriptions are now long overdue', and warned that there could be no further extension. The social and spiritual welfare of the

THE TOWNS

Bantu was being helped out with equipment which consisted of a few hundred books, a piano, a ping-pong table, and a billiard table.

Last but not least, the police station. 'That's the first thing they build,' commented Abraham. With a gaol nearby, the police station is a solid building surrounded by a high stone wall that is pierced with a gate in proper fortress style. 'I think,' Abraham said, 'that we won't go there just now.' It seems that the police, here as elsewhere, are mostly busy at night, raiding the location for people who brew 'Kaffir beer' without a licence, and for 'pass offenders'. The latter consist mainly of Africans who have come illegally into the location, moving from another town or, more often, moving in from the rural areas: without the full complement of several passes—certificates, for example, of residence, employment, origin, and so forth—they are taken to gaol, locked up, fined, and sent 'away'. They are told, that is, to go 'elsewhere', even if there is nowhere legally they have the right to go.

To explain this 'absolute illegality' of many South African-born Africans, the Native Laws Commission is as good an authority as any other. This Commission pointed out, what everyone knew, that under existing legislation each South African municipality acts separately and independently in the exercise of its power to exclude or expel natives from its location. In many cases, they said, exclusion from the location means total exclusion from the municipal area. 'There is, however, no authority on which the responsibility rests to worry about the fate of the people who are thus excluded or expelled.' Cases had come to their notice, they went on, 'where a man is excluded from the town where he was last in employment—perhaps for years—or even where he is still being employed, but where his present employer cannot provide accommodation for him, and the location (as is the case in the majority of the locations) is full'. So what becomes of him? 'He is excluded because he was not born there; if he then returns to the town of his birth, admission there is denied him because he has been away from that town for more than ten years. . . .'

Similar cases, they continued, had been reported to them of people who were born on farms. 'The farmer sells his farm and takes the native family with him to the village, where they remain in his service

‘LOCATION’

and live on his premises. A time arrives when the farmer can no longer keep them; and the municipality will not permit them to move into the location, because they were not born within the municipal area . . . the result is that there are people who simply have no place whatever where they can legally lay their heads. . . .’ Hence, among other things, the tremendous squatting movements of Johannesburg: hence such strange phenomena as the Prophet Mpanza, who ‘led his people over Jordan’ to the settlement which became Moroka. . . .

So do not imagine that the inhabitants of a native location think themselves especially unlucky. On the contrary, they know that they are among the lucky ones. For consider the many who are traipsing from pillar to post, ‘with simply no place whatever where they can legally lay their heads’, badgered by the police, in the last stages of physical distress, without hope or pity, or any chance of hope or pity. For them, at any rate, the right of residence in this waterless, treeless, lightless, comfortless location is not so far from a ticket to paradise.

I said good-bye to Abraham, who parted from me with the polite smile of one who does not really believe that ‘anything will come of it,’ and returned to the bustling comforts of Bloemfontein. I had seen the first stage in the urbanization of Africans. Such conditions, it is true, exist in Western Europe. There is a little shanty-town I know of on the outskirts of the Calabrian town of Crotone, called Shanghai, where about five hundred people live in filth and hunger. There are cave and shanty dwellings around the periphery of Madrid. In Ceylon today you may see much the same thing. Yet always with a difference: for in Europe these conditions are spoken of with shame and embarrassment, and everyone explains (even when it is not true) that they are temporary, makeshift, ‘the best we can do for the time being’. Here in South Africa they are spoken of without shame and embarrassment, while Bloemfontein has reason even to be proud of its location; and the conditions are not intended to be temporary but permanent. Fixed for all time to come.

MIGRANT LABOUR

THE yellow mine dumps, table topped, sit in line upon the skyline like the truncated hills of some titanic mole. They sit upon a ridge raised a little above the long level plains of the veld: early in the morning, people say, the misted sun makes this ridge seem white and pure. Solitary Trekkers, coming upon this ridge rather more than a century ago, called it the Witwatersrand. And since 1885, when men discovered at Barberton in the Eastern Transvaal the mine they named after the Queen of Sheba and panned the first gold of the Rand, founding Johannesburg a year later, the Ridge of White Waters has mastered the destiny of South Africa.

One authority says that between 1884 and 1943 South Africa has mined gold to the value of two billion pounds.³⁴ Another says that since 1910 South African gold has been 30 to 50 per cent of all the gold, year by year, that the world has mined.³⁵

Discovered after diamonds, gold soon put Kimberley in the shade. Until the growth of non-mining industry of late years, gold in South Africa has put everything else in the shade. Professor Frankel, a recognized authority, wrote in 1932 that dividends to oversea investors in South African gold amounted to about £190 millions in the period 1887-1932, or about 75 per cent of all gold-mining dividends; while oversea investors (mainly British), he thought, had in the same period invested (or re-invested) about £120 millions in the Rand.³⁶ Dividends for 1933-47 inclusive are given officially as a total of about £215 millions.³⁷ In sixty years, accordingly, gold mining has yielded dividends which have added up to not less than £465 millions, and may (allowing for the natural discretion of profit-makers) have added up to a good deal more. This gives some small measure of what Imperialism has really meant in Africa: from 1940 to 1948, by contrast, the British House

of Commons voted a mere £25 millions for 'colonial development and welfare'.

People in South Africa praise or curse the gold-mining industry, according to their lights: all are impressed. It is impossible not to be impressed. The more one looks at this industry, the more colossal, the more octopoid, it seems to grow. The few great mining groups which hold the Rand in a tight monopoly, both of selling gold and buying labour, hold also much of the general wealth of South Africa. The Transvaal Chamber of Mines, administrative organ of this control, is in a real sense a second government in this country. There are only two or three English-speaking newspapers in South Africa, for example, which are not more or less directly controlled by the mining interests.

Owing to the nature of the deposits, which are neither surface nor alluvial but embedded in deeply slanting seams of tough rock, South African gold has been *par excellence* the industry of imperialist exploitation. The ore cannot be got in a small way, or cheaply. The miners have needed much machinery, and shafts now reaching down to ten thousand feet and more. Before the 'cyanide process' of extraction was applied in 1890, wastage through tailings was in the order of 40 per cent. For a ton of rock brought up today, the Gold Producers' Committee secures a yield of less than one fine ounce. To make this expensive process 'pay', the Gold Producers' Committee has used an endless supply of cheap African labour; and it is this use of cheap labour, written in blood and toil and sweat, which has marked the story of southern Africa in modern times more surely than any other single factor.

Cheap labour. But how cheap? And how much of it?

In 1890 about 40,000 Africans were employed on the mines (and about 5,000 whites). For the past ten or fifteen years the number of Africans has been steady at about 300,000 (and about 40,000 whites), though tending lately to fall.

In 1890 the average pay of Africans on the mines was about 63s. a month.³⁸ In 1943—since when things have not changed—the Native Mine Wages Commission reported that the average pay for underground African miners was 2s. 3d. a shift, or 68s. for a 'month' of thirty one-day shifts: more than one-tenth of the whole African labour

THE TOWNS

force, however, was earning 2s. a shift or less. Payment in kind—compound lodging, daily food, medical attention, and so forth—has amounted of late years to an equivalent of about one shilling a shift for each African miner, or 30s. a month. All in all, it is fair to say that the average African miner received in cash and in kind about 100s. a month in 1951, compared with 63s. a month in 1890. These figures are in no way adjusted for the steep and successive falls in the value of the pound sterling during the last sixty years.

The real wages of the African miner, very low in 1890, have thus fallen greatly since then, and are still falling.

This steep fall in real wages has been accompanied by a steady fall in the general working costs of the mining companies. 'In 1897,' de Kiewiet points out, 'average working costs were 29s. 6d. per ton milled. Forty years later in 1937 they were 18s. 11d.' Matching this fall in the level of wages and working costs, but moving in the opposite direction, the miner's productivity has greatly risen. Thus in the first six months of 1914 the amount of rock crushed per African miner was about 250 tons: in a similar period of 1930 it was nearly 800 tons.³⁹ In judging the Chamber's adamant case against higher wages, these figures speak eloquently for themselves.

It is necessary to get these few facts clear, because they govern much of the social and economic life of central and southern Africa. Earnest commissions of medical men, missionaries, social workers, and officials have debated and dilated on the disease, the abandonment of family life, the decay of agriculture, the breakdown of all serious tribal tradition, that are present in central and southern Africa today, and are intimately associated with the provision of cheap labour for the gold-fields of the Rand. The method of this provision—migratory labour—has been several times condemned by official investigators. But the Chamber of Mines has 'laid great stress on the fact that its policy was to employ cheap native labour';⁴⁰ and the Chamber has had its way. Such is the power of the Chamber, indeed, that commission after commission has assembled together to discuss with solemn and judicious care whether his skeleton payment to African miners could be regarded as adequate, or whether there might after all be 'call for some adjustment'.

MIGRANT LABOUR

The Mine Native Wages Commission of 1943, for example, came to the end of a long and exhaustive report, in which it was clearly shown that Africans were dying on their feet, that an additional 'three-pence per shift' should be made 'as a cost of living allowance'; but the Chamber, knowing better, objected.

It is fashionable in Britain at the moment, and among the white settler communities of British Africa, to discover with horror that Dr. Malan and the Nationalists are ruining South Africa. But gold mining is a pie into which the Nationalists have never managed to insert a thumb, nor pulled out one single plum. Most of the profits of gold mining have gone oversea, at any rate until the last few years; most of the great mining corporations are based on London; most of the politics of gold mining has been United Party politics, 'English' politics. And, more telling even than this, many of the African miners of the Rand are not South African natives, but British African natives. If real wages are today lower on the Rand than in 1890, if the migrant labour system is more than ever destructive of health and happiness (and very serious authorities say it is), the fault lies not in the least with the Nationalists. It lies with the United Party. With the British.

The migrant labour system and starvation wages were fathered by Rhodes and his friends. The arms of this system now reach far across the Continent. Its fingers point into Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, far Tanganyika; into all the three High Commission territories, Bechuanaland, Basutoland, and Swaziland; and they point, by so doing, a dreadful accusation at the whole concept and career of British colonial policy.

In the Rhodesias, Nyasaland, and the three High Commission territories the British have been content to apply the same method of forcing out cheap African labour as Rhodes applied in the Glen Grey Act—and the Boers before him. With some notable exceptions, the economic paralysis of these territories has driven the Africans into the Union of South Africa, all racial discrimination notwithstanding, to seek a wage for cash. The results are little short of astounding. Out of a total of 185,000 African wage-earners shown by the census of 1946 for Nyasaland, no fewer than 120,000 men were described as being employed outside that country; and over 33,000 men were located in the Union of

THE TOWNS

South Africa. The women, almost exclusively, stay behind. Small wonder that a Special Committee on Migrant Labour should urge the Governor of Nyasaland in 1936 that 'something must be done at once to remedy a state of affairs which . . . constitutes a flagrant breach of that ideal of trusteeship of native races not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world. . . .'⁴¹

If this flow of young men out of the Protectorate were not checked, that committee held, 'the moral, social, and physical life of the native population will be so affected that attempts by missions or by Government or other agencies to maintain, let alone to improve upon, the present low standard of health and happiness will be abortive. Home life will cease to exist; all belief in the sanctity of marriage will disappear: immorality will be the rule; venereal disease will affect 100 per cent of the population; the birth rate will fall; large tracts of land will be rendered unfit for habitation; and, resident chiefly in other lands, the Nyasaland-born natives will have acquired a complete distrust in and loathing for administration by the white people, which has made a wilderness and called it peace. . . .'⁴²

But the flow has not been checked (though a little reduced); and the Chamber of Mines, stressing its 'policy of cheap native labour', has continued to enjoy the co-operation of the Nyasaland Government in fulfilling it.

These words might as well be applied to other British territories. In Bechuanaland 'about four men in five have either been abroad in the past or are still away . . . roughly three [Bechuana] men out of every five in the Union are working on the Witwatersrand gold mines. . . .'⁴³ In 1939 the proportion of gold mines labour supplied by Basutoland was 14.98 per cent (in 1950, at a time of low recruitment for seasonal reasons, it was about 11 per cent). The Bechuanaland Africans are worse off than their fellows from Basutoland, because their fares (which they have to pay in one direction) are higher. 'At the rate of wages paid in 1943,' according to one acknowledged authority, 'the usual amount of money earned by a [Bechuanaland] worker completing his contract [of twelve months on the Rand] was just under £28. This means that the Francistown recruit [in north-eastern Bechuanaland] paid nearly

MIGRANT LABOUR

7½ per cent of his cash earnings, and the Maun recruit [in north-western Bechuanaland] nearly 18 per cent of his cash earnings, in getting to and from his place of work. The latter was thus left with £23 per annum, or nearly £2 a month, in addition to the food, housing, and other free services, that he received while at work. . . .'⁴⁴

A trifle mean of the millionaires of the Gold Producers' Committee? Perhaps, but 'even this rate', adds the same authority, 'compares very favourably with the wages paid in Ngamiland [the country of the Maun recruit].'' The British territories, it would seem, have nothing to shout about. Even so, they are better than the Portuguese territories. Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) has always supplied a part of non-South African mining labour, though the proportion has dwindled from 66 per cent of all mining labour in 1904 to 43 per cent in 1924 and to 26 per cent in 1939, at about which level it continues. At the end of 1950, there were just over 80,000 'East Coast boys', as they are called, on the Rand. In 1943 it was found that 'East Coast boys'—who tend to do the lowest paid work in the mines—returning from a year's work on the Rand 'bring with them on the average £11 plus a quantity of clothing for the family. . . .'⁴⁵

Within the pattern of imperialism such as central and southern Africa have witnessed under British administration, no doubt there was and is no alternative but to send the surplus rural workers to industrial centres, however distant and unpleasant, where they can obtain work. Yet it will be futile to object to the state of affairs in South Africa without applying the objection, with equal force, to the state of affairs in British Africa. Quite a large part of British Africa today is planned economically to do little more than act as a reservoir of cheap mining labour. So long as this is so, the better treatment which Africans receive in these British territories can be little more than a mask for a system of employment which approaches serfdom. One cannot praise the one and regret the other, for they are parts of one and the same system.

Many of these African miners, remember, travel thousands of miles to reach their destination. They stay for a while, nine months or twelve months or more, and then they return to their villages. Many will come

THE TOWNS

back to the Rand again and again. They are reasonably fit when they are taken, for, as Dr. Gale, a South African Secretary for Health and a former missionary, pointed out before the Native Laws Commission, 'the mines recruit only physically fit persons'. But among those whom the recruiting agents reject, continued Dr. Gale, 'are many who have become unfit through venereal disease, tuberculosis, and muscular-cum-articular "rheumatism"—chronic degenerative diseases of which the principal initial cause is conditions of mine labour.'

Many contract venereal disease on the long road home, 'when the returning labourer's money attracts touts and prostitutes'. Even if he contracts syphilis on the Rand, however, 'the labourer does not always get treatment that is adequate to protect him from long-term effects of the disease. The gross early manifestations of syphilis can easily be cleared up by a few injections, and the labourer rendered fit for work again. But unless treatment at weekly intervals is continued for twelve to twenty-four months the disease merely becomes latent. There are no obvious manifestations, but in at least one-fifth of all cases it quietly "white ants" some vital organ. . . . Thus, if infection is acquired at the age of twenty to twenty-five, the breakdown comes at thirty-five to forty in the prime of working life. Before this stage the sufferer has been rejected by the recruiting agents; and the mine medical services are powerless to help him. He is now an economic liability instead of an asset. The mines had him when he was an asset. The rural area has him when he is a liability. . . .'

It is much the same with tuberculosis. The mine medical services take great care to examine their African labourers for tuberculosis; and incipient cases are treated. But once the disease gains firm hold, the labourer is turned away and sent home again. 'Sample surveys here and there,' Dr. Gale pointed out, 'suggest that some 75 per cent of those who leave the mines with incipient T.B. are dead within two years.' But, 'in the interval, they have spread infection' in their rural areas.

Yet the Chamber of Mines is happy to tell you that its African T.B. rate is by far the lowest in South Africa. It boasts with a nicely moderated vanity of its success in reducing deaths from T.B. While the general death rate for 'urbanized natives' in South Africa may be seven or

MIGRANT LABOUR

eight hundred or more per 100,000, and the European death rate 32 per 100,000, the death rate on the mines, according to the Chamber, was only 52 in 1945.⁴⁶ In 1942, indeed, the Chamber announced its T.B. death rate for Africans as only 32 per 100,000—an estimate which the medical experts Dormer and Wiles found was ‘as ludicrous as it is statistically inaccurate’. The Chamber, of course, had stated the facts quite correctly: it had omitted, however, to include in its calculation the deaths of Africans who had contracted T.B. on the Rand but had died elsewhere. No sooner does a miner show signs of dying from T.B., in fact, than the mines bundle him off the premises. If they kept him, after all, they would have to show their effective death rate from T.B., which is probably over 300 per 100,000, or nine times as high as the European death rate.

For the Africans, all these statistics are really beside the point. The price of visiting Goli may be mortally high: they are still ready to pay it. They need to earn cash, they want to get into the modern world, they are eager to taste the white man’s civilization: unfailingly, they continue to come, three hundred thousand of them every year, to the mines of Goli. They are pushed by all manner of social pressures. In Bechuanaland, Schapera found that ‘labour migration . . . [had] almost entirely replaced the *bogwera* [traditional circumcision rites] as a mark of maturity’; the girls were said to show a preference for men who had been abroad. All over central and southern Africa the motor buses of the recruiting agencies have become a common sight; some of the recruits—between Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland—are even lifted to work by aeroplane; many individuals, unable for one reason or another to gain acceptance by recruiting agents, will make the endless journey on foot, thumbing a lift southward here and there, but walking, walking, walking . . . until Goli, the legend of Goli, has grown with all it means into a living part of African thought throughout the Continent south of the Equator.

Innumerable songs celebrate the sorrows of Goli. Many of them are ‘popular hits’. Here is a Zulu song recorded by Hugh Tracey which tells of a young man who should have come home and married the girl, but has ‘disappeared into the vortex of town life and no one knows if he is

THE TOWNS

alive or dead'. Constant requests were received from Zulu girls in domestic service, Tracey says, for this record to be broadcast.⁴⁷

Lying in the graves,
Lying in the mine dumps
The lover of my child . . .

And here is another which 'reflects the distress of the parents who go in search of their lost daughter, only to find her in bad company'. They 'remember poignantly her innocent childhood days at home in the country':

Beyond the banks of the Vaal
We came to the great city of Goli
As the sun was setting
I saw my child Mary
And thought of her childhood days.

And a popular concert song that is based upon a true incident:

We were sent by our parents
To search for our father's child.
He went and vanished in Goli
We loved this father's child,
He left a big gap at home.
We arrived at the huge station in Jozi.
They said: 'If you want him, go to the Malay Camp.'
We went, and when we arrived we were attacked by a mob.
And there we caught sight of him amongst the attackers.
The policemen came
And the mob dispersed.
Then we said: 'We want him.'
We said: 'Where is he? Where has he gone?'
They said: 'Here he is among the ruffians.'
We found him jiving and jumping
To the sound of a big banging piano.
It was said to us: 'These are ruffians, these are ruffians.'

Nowhere in the world today, perhaps, does there exist a greater contrast between reputation and reality than between the towering legend

MIGRANT LABOUR

of the white man's civilization and the grim truth of it for the African worker. But nowhere in the world, no less, does there survive a greater contrast between master and servant than survives between the mining company and the African miner: and nowhere is there a clearer lesson of the need for radical change in economic and social structure if South African civilization is not to remain the petrified image of a rapacious past.

Down well-trodden routes through Africa, at times along the very routes that the slave-traders used of old, the workers come to Goli.

MINING COMPOUND

THERE isn't much to see above ground at a gold mine. There's the pithead gear, a few sheds, a maze of railway sidings: and nearby, behind a little arrangement of green lawns and well-tended flowers, there is the compound where the workers live. In this particular case, five thousand workers. There is no sign or suggestion of comfort or of the amenities one associates even with a military barracks. But there is also no sign or suggestion of physical brutality or suffering: on the contrary, the ragged loitering crowd looks cheerful enough, and at times (such being the nature of Africans) even gay.

We arrived one day just as the miners were beginning to come up from their shift, which runs from about seven o'clock until two. They had almost no distance to walk before reaching the compound, and strolled in through the gate in their dusty miner's rags, some with battered metal helmets, some talking, some by themselves. There were no guards at the gate, with the exception of three tough Africans in uniform who stopped a man now and then and made him show his 'ticket'—just to be sure that no one was slipping in who hadn't the right to be there. For a time we stood at the gate and watched this ragged rather good-natured crew walk across from the pithead lifts. Powdered with dust, their rags flapping, their powdered bodies showing through their rags, they offered a remarkable variety in physical types. I never realized before how much Africans can differ in looks among themselves: but this lot, after all, was gathered from an area several times the size of France.

They walked in, went to their little rooms (where concrete bunks are provided for them) and spread out their mine clothes in the sun, before going in a pair of shorts or a blanket to the showers. We watched them washing down: they had splendid bodies, with fine-muscled limbs and

MINING COMPOUND

tapering hips, easily swung shoulders, and they were laughing and joking and soaping and splashing themselves, glad to be out of the dust and the darkness of the mine.

The compound manager, an amiable elderly man of some forty-five years' experience of 'boys', took me round. He's one of the old school, speaks several African languages, is obviously rather fond of his 'boys' in a distant amused way, and doesn't even much despise them. On this mine, with four compounds, there is an average of 377 in hospital a day, with an average daily admission of 48, the complement in hospital being $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. These cases are made up as to .82 by sickness and .70 by accidents.

A smart-alick African is the welfare officer. I took him for a stooge; and he looked as if he took himself for one too. He smiled and strutted about and showed us his little class rooms for 'voluntary education', mainly in literacy. *The cat runs after the mouse*, explained a blackboard, *the mouse runs down a hole: but the cat is too thick to go in*. He pointed to four desks allotted to the workers from Basutoland. 'All these their desks', he said: about one-ninth of mining recruits come from Basutoland. He pointed airily around the class room; and it was a dark little potting-shed of a place, bare of anything but a few illustrated safety-first posters and a couple of blackboards. Still, it must be admitted that the mines refused until lately to allow literacy classes of any kind.

Two Africans in dancing feathers splashed specks of colour in the compound. Our welfare officer rushed up and set their plumes straight, for they were going to be photographed.

'What are those costumes?'

'Oh,' said the compound manager, 'they're just something the boys have thought up. They amuse themselves a bit, you know.'

'And the dances? Traditional?'

The compound manager, who has sojourned long in this land of blood and gold, wearily shook his head. 'No, the traditional dances are pretty well dying out, you know.' He shouted at the little group: 'Here, make that boy shake himself a bit. But the boy was shy and grinned his refusal.

'No drums, that's the trouble,' commented my guide.

THE TOWNS

The feeding arrangements are on the same colossal scale as the dividends of mining. They provide, I am told, 'a balanced diet' of about 4,000 calories a day. I saw vats of *marewu*, or mealie porridge, with 900 gallons of the stuff in each. A worker gets an average of five pints a day.

We watched them getting their food. Three or four Africans stood beside a white mountain of porridge and ladled a helping into each trough-like plate that was offered. Another cook ladled vegetable soup on to the same plates: and that was that. A little further on, someone else was standing at the cock of the *marewu* pipe, and running out a ration to anyone who wanted it. 'They can always get a bit more if they want it,' explained the manager, 'we're not mean, you know.'

No drink is allowed in the compound. Three times a week the workers receive a pint of kaffir-beer: a kind of thin porridge with low alcoholic content.

'The boys have everything they want,' the compound manager kept saying, as if it were not quite self-evident, 'they're free to come and go as they please so long as they turn up for work at the right time.' This remark, I very much fear, was a little optimistic: no 'compound natives' are allowed beyond the mine boundary without a pass, and a pass is not easy to obtain. For recreation in this compound, I noticed a couple of skittle alleys and a dancing arena—much liked by the mining companies as a means of getting the miners 'to work off steam' and 'keep themselves tribal'—built on ancient Greek lines, with a sandy floor and tiers of stone benches.

I took the manager aside.

'What about women?'

'Well,' said the manager, and gave me a careful look. I am not going to repeat what the manager told me: suffice it that no women are ever allowed into these compounds.

The 'boys', nonetheless, 'have everything they want.' And when they return home—I am quoting from a little illustrated booklet published by the Chamber of Mines—'they will be healthy and happy'. Of course, they cannot be allowed to bring their families with them, because that would cost the Chamber too much in social services.⁴⁸

It occurred to me, while I was wandering round this compound, that

MINING COMPOUND

the late George Orwell might have spared himself the pains of imagining a world of 1984. For the elements of Orwell's hell are all present here. Not slavery in the old sense: no—but intelligent, hygienic, totalitarian slavery. The Chamber of Mines is interested in securing and conserving a docile, healthy, and unambitious labour force—rather as a stock farmer is interested in securing and conserving healthy and useful cattle—and takes measures accordingly: beyond that, its interests do not run. There is nothing cruel about these compounds except their inhumanity: their inhabitants do not suffer except by being treated, systematically and intentionally, as incapable of personal or social development. 'Mine boys' they are; and 'mine boys' they will remain. The Chamber cannot tell you of any essential way in which the 'mine boys' of today differ in their condition of development from the 'mine boys' of fifty years ago. All here is stagnant, paralytic. And it cannot be otherwise: for a consciously developing labour force would soon break from the narrow frontiers of their scope, and begin demanding a larger life. And a larger life, the Chamber says and says again, would ruin the goldfields. Where but in this strange land of Goli could such a bitter paradox exist—that gold, the king of metals, should be mined by men who are paid and treated thus?

Imagine this great river of African life and vigour, flowing and fed from a thousand tributaries in many lands, strong, self-confident, capable of a thousand things . . . and consider how it drains away, year after year, into this stagnant sea of uniformity, the bare and barbarous monotony of the compounds. . . .

Where else has the 'civilizing mission' of white settlement, the high vision of Livingstone and his like, come to such an end as this?

The African mining worker cannot develop because he is not permitted to develop. The system is designed to protect him from 'outside urban influences', and to maintain him in his 'tribal purity'. His mumbo-jumbo is sacrosanct. When two or three are gathered together in a compound to organize a trade union on primitive lines, or to demand a higher wage, or to complain against this or that grievance, they are called 'agitators' and they are put down. Hence it comes about that the 300,000 migrant workers on the mines do not form an indus-

THE TOWNS

trial proletariat in any accepted sense of the word: they have profited nothing from some sixty years of industrialization. They are not free to sell their labour in the best market, since there is only one market—the highly organized buying monopoly of the Gold Producers' Committee. They have no alternative—other than starving or stagnating in their rural areas—but to accept a level of real wages which the Gold Producers' Committee has never ceased to depress since the early days of 'free recruitment'. Their relations with industry are not those of the industrial worker under a developed capitalism, but those of serf to feudal lord.

Even so, being men as other men are, they have tried from time to time to join together for their common betterment. But the Chamber is convinced that 'the native labourers on the mines have not yet reached the stage of development which would admit of their using trade unions usefully or with safety. The natives are not,' the Chamber urges, 'sufficiently advanced to control and manage an organization like a labour union without outside aid, and the Chamber is strongly antagonistic to the recognition as a trade union operative on the mines, of any society existing outside the mines, being apprehensive, and not without some ground, that in some cases officers of such societies are associated with communistic interests, though there is no allegation that the societies themselves are subject to any such influence.'⁴⁹

'Communistic' or not, thousands of non-mining Africans are entering the industrial revolution today; and they have their influence on the mining Africans. In 1946, memorable moment, upwards of 100,000 'mine boys' came out on strike. Not since great upheavals in 1922 had the Rand seen anything like it. Perhaps they were organized from outside, perhaps they organized themselves: in any case, thousands of them left their compounds one day and began to march to neighbouring Johannesburg. They marched with no intention other than that of asking for passes to return home to their families. They were exercising the traditional right of withdrawing their labour, the one contingency with which the Chamber is not fully equipped to deal. But on their way to Johannesburg they were met by the police, and the police bludgeoned and battered them back to their compounds, while the press of white

MINING COMPOUND

South Africa and every tuppenny politician shouted rape and murder. Some were killed. Hundreds were admitted to hospital. On other parts of the Rand 'mine boys' who wished to join this strike—which caught both Government and mining companies, who believed it 'could not happen', utterly unprepared—were forced to go down the pits, whereupon they struck by refusing to come up again. They were driven to the surface by the police—and the jubilant words are those of the *Rand Daily Mail* at the time—'stope by stope and level by level'. All their officials were arrested and documents seized. . . .

And this, be it remembered, was not done under a Government of the Nationalists. It was done under a Government of the United Party, and while Smuts was Prime Minister.

THE REVOLT AGAINST MINING

'I REALLY feel,' said H. J. van Eck, 'that we are starting a new era.' It was a relief to meet him; with this Afrikaner administrator who was formerly a scientist, a little light at last begins to show through the trees. For here is a man who is important in South Africa both as a person—he is the influential and politically orthodox chairman of the State-promoted Industrial Development Corporation—but also as a portent of change. He is more than the administrator of much capital: he is a new kind of capitalist. With van Eck one begins to get away, at last, from the weary polemics of the Chamber of Mines; from the dreary legends of the white man about the black man; from the sense of hopeless deadlock.

Not that the chairman of the Industrial Development Corporation is in any political sense a radical. Although South Africa permits no African male workers to benefit from recognized trade union rights, he is still capable of saying that 'our labour legislation is among the most advanced in the world'.⁵⁰ He is loyal to the *lares* and *penates* of white prejudice, or at any rate to some of them. Nevertheless, he has the key and the only key that will open a door to South Africa's private hell; and he is busy trying to turn it. Given the complicated nature of the lock, the turning is a process far from easy. It may be that Dr. van Eck will not get the key turned in time, or that stronger hands will seize it from him and turn it themselves. Within the limits of political orthodoxy, he is doing his best.

He is a large and handsome man, built rather on the lines of those early capitalists whom Dürer painted, discreet but determined, with a true Dutch attention to facts, and tight of lip. Passages in a lecture which he delivered in January 1951 might very well—allowing for changes in idiom and form—have been uttered by the great Fuggers to their late

THE REVOLT AGAINST MINING

medieval clientèle. They could scarcely have sounded more strange to those who listened. For van Eck preaches the doctrine of an expansive industrial capitalism in a country where 'European opinion', to quote Professor H. R. Burrows of the University of Natal, 'does not admit that an increase in African productivity would tend to raise the standard of living of the whole population, or even that a more stable African population practising a greater division of labour would tend to raise its productivity.' Dr. van Eck, in short, sees the need to industrialize South Africa, and, in so doing, to industrialize the African worker as well as the non-African worker. He recognizes that South Africa must say good-bye to the purely extractive capitalism of mining and extensive farming, and raise by modern methods the appallingly low productivity of the average inhabitant.

A consistent attempt to build non-mining industry in South Africa was first made by the Nationalist Government of General Hertzog in the 'twenties. In 1928 the Government promoted *Iscon*, the Iron and Steel Corporation of South Africa; and the process continued after the slump of the early 'thirties. The first world war had trebled the production of manufactured goods in South Africa, but had come too soon for newly-granted independence to make the most of this; the second world war carried the gross value of the output of secondary industry from £187 millions in 1938 to £583 millions a decade later, and, in so doing, revolutionized the whole economy.

The results are already considerable. In the year 1929-30, for example, there were just over 80,000 Africans in private manufacturing industry in the Union; and their average wage was £45 a year.⁵¹ In 1937-8 their numbers had risen to 156,000; but the average wage was still no more than £45 8s. a year. Ten years later the number of Africans in non-mining industry had risen to 308,000; and their average wage stood at £103 6s. a year.⁵² The change was enormous.

This change continues, and with profound effects. Another measure of it may be seen in the expansion of fixed capital in factories and manufacturing in South Africa: from £113 millions with gross output valued at £200 millions for 1938-9, to £187 millions with gross output of £418 millions for 1945-6. The Industrial Legislation Commission which

THE TOWNS

reported at the end of 1951 found that the proportion of natives employed in manufacturing, in terms of all employees in manufacturing, was rising steeply. In 1938-9 the proportion of natives employed in manufacturing to all employees in manufacturing was only 13.9 per cent for the Western Cape: in 1947-8 this proportion of natives had risen to 22.4 per cent. Comparable figures for the Southern Transvaal were 57.1 per cent and 60.4 per cent; for Durban and Pinetown 41.5 per cent and 50.4 per cent; and for Port Elizabeth 24.2 per cent and 34.2 per cent. Between 1948 and 1951, according to figures published by the *Rand Daily Mail*, the proportion of Africans in industry increased by 13 per cent of all employees, but the number of whites by only 4 per cent. More and more, South African manufacturing is founded on non-white labour.

Manufacturing industry in 1951 provided about 22 per cent of the national income; gold mining only about 11 per cent. The principle that South Africa is built on gold, and that without this 'giant flywheel' South Africa would perish, begins already not to be true. New industries are growing up in which a significant part of the labour force is non-white, and begins to do semi-skilled work. In 1939, for example, the South African Garment Workers' Union had only white workers: today it has almost as many non-white workers; and textile employers have been amongst the most progressive of the business community.

As a contribution towards developing the Reserves, the Industrial Development Corporation has promoted an African textile factory at Zwelitsha near Kingwilliamstown in the Ciskei; and this factory, in spite of teething troubles, has proved a successful 'pilot project'. It has even done something to destroy the powerful white legend that Africans are incapable of skilled work. Speaking of Zwelitsha, Dr. van Eck has said that 'in individual cases very high efficiencies in spinning and weaving have been achieved in a relatively short time . . . [and] present indications are that with patience and perseverance a high overall efficiency will be achieved and maintained.' These African operatives at Zwe'itsha are paid £2 a week, which, as Dr. van Eck has proudly put it, 'is more than double the wages paid for comparable occupations in Japan'.

THE REVOLT AGAINST MINING

Another sign of the times is the toying of the Oppenheimer group, The Anglo-American Corporation, with the notion of developing a stable African labour force on the new goldfields in the Orange Free State. 'Anglo-American' has had experience of this in the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, where the compound system is combined with a stable labour force, and Africans live with their families in houses provided by the mining companies; but the notion, needless to say, is anything but popular with the less enterprising interests on the Rand. The more intelligent attitude of the Oppenheimer group can be gauged from an article in *Optima*, a journal of 'Anglo-American', where Mr. Royden Harrison, at one time general manager of the Rhokana Corporation, lately urged the possibility of training skilled African labour. 'The African in the Central African territories,' he wrote, 'has proved himself to be adaptable to the standards laid down by authority. He has shown that, given the necessary incentives, he is capable of obtaining a high standard of occupational skill in a number of different spheres. He reacts beneficially to the provisions made for his welfare and he is capable of independent thought and action. . . .' What might seem platitudinous elsewhere becomes, in this context, not far short of revolutionary.

Many business men already understand the need, in their own interests, to bring the migratory labour system to an end. Thus a journal speaking for the Transvaal Chamber of Industries, *Industrial Review*, could write in August 1951 that it was 'hocked' to see the official journal of the Chamber of Mines advocating by inference the maintenance of the tradition of migratory labour. 'To many sincere thinkers,' commented *Industrial Review*, 'migratory labour is one of the curses of South Africa's labour position. . . . We would, in all sincerity, ask the Transvaal Chamber of Mines' official publicists if the greater good of the Union is not served by the labour market which offers to the native opportunities of advancement in skill and earning capacity, stability in occupation, home and social life, and ensures that he becomes an economic factor in the country in which he is living and working?'

This South African revolt of 'manufacturing against mining', though

THE TOWNS

still in its early stages, had already gone far enough in 1950 for the President of the South African Federated Chamber of Industries, Mr. Hector Hart, to speak in his address to the Chamber's annual convention of 'the urgent necessity for more practical demonstrations of goodwill and interest in the welfare of the largest section of our population, the native people', and to appeal 'for a dispassionate and impartial treatment of the problem outside the realm of party politics and on the highest possible level'.

All in all, the numbers of whites employed in non-mining industry in the Union of South Africa rose between 1938 and 1948 from 143,760 to 210,438, eliminating in the process the main core of 'poor white-ism' as a community problem. But the number of non-whites so employed rose in the same period from 204,000 to 401,000—and opened for South Africa, as Dr. van Eck remarked, 'a new era'.

This, then, is the latest and decisive stage in the African's coming to town. To the 'locations' he came long ago, only to fester through long decades of despised poverty as the lowliest employee of a slow-moving 'colonial economy'. So long as that economy was primarily agrarian, intimately concerned with industry only in the production of raw materials, the future of these 'urbanized natives' was one of unrelieved servitude. For the migrant workers on the mines it was worse than that, for they could not even profit from the crumbs of civilization dropped from the masters' table. They worked in towns, but they were fiercely segregated; they were not in the least 'urbanized'. Only rare men of outstanding energy and gifts among them could hope to escape the treadmill. In these conditions the white man in South Africa could count upon the infinite duration of his semi-slave labour, and need only devise from time to time new measures of coercion and repression.

But now the *esprits forts* among South African capitalists, the men whose money is not tied up in mining, begin to realize that South Africa is blessed with the classical pre-conditions for a rapid growth of industry. Seen from this angle, the future ceases to be one of worsening deadlock and eventual explosion, with chaos and civil war as the only real prospect; and takes on a new and hopeful form. South Africa has large supplies of wonderfully accessible coal of good quality; she has

plenty of iron ore and other minerals; she has large and hungry markets in the under-nourished and under-provided populations of southern Africa, and, by the same token, large supplies of labour—if only her white masters can liberate themselves from the worst of their prejudices and learn to develop these markets and resources.

This advance, it is true, has generally proved beyond the grasp of 'white civilization'; and even today, when the lessons of industrialism are plain for all to see, there is probably a majority of whites in South Africa for whom the lesson is still too difficult. Hence the crying contradiction between the policies of racial segregation—inherently the basis of policy both for the Nationalists and the United Party, for the 'Dutch, and the 'English'—and the facts of racial integration which industrialism implies. The immovable object of white prejudice is opposed to the irresistible force of economic integration: while employing non-whites in their factories and shops in ever-growing numbers, the whites are still happy to urge 'complete segregation' of non-white from white, and fail, in their blindness, to see the absurdity of their position. *Eppure si muove*: it is the irresistible force of economic integration which wins and must win, however hatefully the majority of whites may resist its pressure. The integration of white and non-white is taking place, through industrialism, under their very eyes. They succumb to it, even while they babble still the myths and slogans of a world that is gone.

But industrialism implies not only the semi-skilled and skilled employment of non-whites. It implies a radical change in the conditions of employment, a change in the whole framework of social relations. Trekking out of the backveld to conquer new fields in urban industry, the Nationalists bring with them the ark and the covenant of Boer society, the concept of master-and-slave and the laws appropriate thereto. With undaunted obscurantism, they seem to imagine they can industrialize South Africa without abandoning their old beliefs. The African farm labourer was a despised 'kaffir', paid far below subsistence level and denied the rights of civilization (even of Boer civilization). The African industrial worker should be the same. But a despised and starving 'kaffir'—as manufacturers like Mr. Hector Fort have noted—cannot become an industrial worker unless he ceases to be despised and

starved. To industrialize South Africa—and escape his own eventual ruin and frustration—the white man must call to his aid countless thousands, and millions, of despised and starving ‘kaffirs’. He must train them, house them, give them a place within society, and even an honourable place: he must begin to think in the terms at least of industrial capitalism: he must expect to treat with trade unions, with growing demands for a better standard of living, with the whole apparatus of social adjustment and negotiation that is inseparable from economic progress.

The Nationalists in South Africa, and almost in the same degree the bulk of the non-Nationalists, seem more or less completely unequipped to operate within themselves such far-reaching changes of thought and attitude. They have entered upon an industrial revolution without in the least comprehending its implications. Their approach to the class conflicts inseparable from an industrial economy, to trade unions, to property relations, seems to approximate to the spirit of the British Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800. White trade unions they tolerate, it is true, though they try to corrupt and undermine them; non-white trade unions they consider as the products of the devil himself. And it is the tragic accompaniment of this attitude that the bulk of white workers in South Africa, having for so long enjoyed the privileged status of an imperialist community, are in poor case to help the non-white worker in his struggle for a better life.

Having said that the industrialization of South Africa opens a new era in which the hope of racial integration is both new and real, it is therefore necessary to enter a serious reservation. The society of South Africa has emerged from a century of violently extractive accumulation in a sorry state of instability. Through this society there runs a rigid horizontal line, scored deep by habit and emotion, which is the ‘colour line’. Below this line, broadly speaking, are all the dispossessed: above it are the possessors. No doubt there are exceptions. No doubt there are bitter conflicts of class and interest between the possessors, as the history of white trade unionism in South African abundantly shows; yet the masters of white society have succeeded in keeping these conflicts subordinate to the greater conflict between white and non-white. At the

THE REVOLT AGAINST MINING

very moment, then, when the coming of industrialism renders the economic strains of society more acute, South Africa is already cursed with an artificial and emotional schism in its people. A capitalist economy which is emerging from the colonial era requires—as transatlantic examples have repeatedly shown—an extremely flexible concept of property relations. In South Africa, by contrast, the non-white man must crouch beneath the ceiling of white colour prejudice: if he rises above it, he must be knocked down at once. The white man, on the other hand, has the solid floor of that prejudice beneath his feet; and his fellows will not usually let him sink beneath it, no matter how feckless, improvident, and dishonest he may be. The class war is also a race war.

There is thus no ground for supposing that South Africa can industrialize itself quickly or painlessly, as the wealth of past experience in the world and its own resources ought to enable it to do. To listen to many South African industrialists, one would think that the world had so far learnt nothing of the process. They speak of their intentions as if they were pioneers breaking new ground, instead of benighted provincials caught in their ignorance far behind the times. They excuse the appalling conditions to which they submit their 'urbanized natives' on the ground that 'Britain went through all that in her day'; while the notion that they could avoid 'all that', by taking thought and overleaping the mistakes and miseries of British industrialism, seems simply not to occur to them. The same state of mind I found later in Southern and Northern Rhodesia, where the beginnings of industrialism are also present. These people seem prepared to submit their non-white populations to all the wretchedness and ruin of the industrial revolution in Britain; and to re-enact in these countries the scenes of violence and coercion through which the working people of Britain were obliged to pass in order to gain, step by step, the elementary social rights they now enjoy.

Such is the setting of the drama. The curtain goes down at last on the sweetly lingering *lekker lewe* of rural solitude, on the world of patriarchal property relations, on the seizure and dispossession of three hundred years' of settlement. It rises to new and strange scenes, where hope is present once again but is still hedged round with despair and fear, and where the last act has still to be written. What that last act will

THE TOWNS

bring forth—a *dénouement* in terms of the old disaster or of the new development—is not known: that is the reason why the drama has such compelling power, and why all men and women in South Africa, no matter how obscurely placed they may be, watch it with riveted attention. For the drama is their own: the actors are themselves.

THE URBAN AFRICAN

IN the beginning there were the Ninehvites. They inhabited the native settlements around Johannesburg before 1918; and used for their weapons thin sharpened strips of wire, which they pushed between the ribs of their victims. It was said that they were men of the Pondo tribe, but that may be slanderous: in any case they were not many, and they were suppressed through the exploits of a courageous white detective who camouflaged himself as one of their number.

After the Ninehvites there came the *amalaitas*. Their numbers were greater, and their methods less refined; but murder was the general rule. The *amalaitas*, more or less, were not suppressed at all: they persisted through the 'twenties and 'thirties, only to merge, in the 'forties, with the *tsotsis*, or 'narrow-trouser boys', of contemporary Johannesburg. The *tsotsis* are with us still: it is they, by and large, who run the reign of terror which dominates the suburbs of Johannesburg between dusk and dawn. It is they for the most part, though not all the murderers on the Rand are black, who account for the weekly trail of mutilated corpses that the police record. It is they who make it generally unsafe for a white man or woman to pass on foot through the African settlements after dark; and who make it a good deal less than safe for an African man or woman to do the same.

There is nothing secret or mysterious about the *tsotsis*. Unlike their predecessors, the Ninehvites, their identity is generally known. They are easily recognized, being for the most part adolescent youths and 'juveniles'. A couple of them grinned nastily and shook their sticks at Mr. Nkosi one morning in Moroka, as he and I were walking round and taking notes.

'Bad elements,' said Mr. Nkosi, who knows what he is talking about.

THE TOWNS

We watched them walking away through the dust, their sticks twirling.

Perhaps half a million Africans inhabit settlements adjacent to Johannesburg. In their great majority they are people who have no intention of returning to the countryside where most of them were born: of those who do mean to return, most will try it only towards the end of their lives. They form a community which, while conserving many of the customs and superstitions of tribal life (though usually in a debased form), has become more or less completely 'detribalized'. They are suspended in a social vacuum between their cast-off tribalism and the white man's civilization: the first has exhausted its value for them, the second they are not—or not yet—permitted to enter. In the meanwhile they shuttle and stumble between the two, leaning now the one way and now the other, uncertain of their past, their present, or their future, but grimly, patiently, doggedly clinging to the few footholds in life that they can find. Similar communities can be found elsewhere—in and around Pretoria, Durban, Port Elizabeth, East London—but it is above all in Johannesburg that their ways are to be studied.

They live a strange twilight existence shuttered away from the white man's knowledge, but which the white man studies from time to time with devoted care. Those few missionaries and social workers who have gained the confidence of Africans in these settlements bring back stories of lives which seem bereft of security, comfort, and the recognized rules of behaviour that make community living possible. Apart from these few individuals, white men and women do not go near the settlements—with the notable exception of the police. Most of the inhabitants of these settlements, unhappily, acquire their opinion of white society through the pattern imposed by police behaviour. And police behaviour in these settlements is admitted on all sides to be brutal, provocative, and calculated to arouse hatred.

The business of the police in these settlements is simple and straightforward. They are charged with seeing that all Africans have the necessary passes, of course, but they are charged above all with the task of arresting those who brew 'beer' without a licence. Now, the brewing of

THE URBAN AFRICAN

'beer'—which is not beer, but a gruel-like liquid of varying consistency and alcoholic content—is probably comparable for the urban African with the brewing of tea for the urban Englishman. 'Beer' is more than a comfort and a pleasure: it is a social amenity. And 'beer' is precisely what the authorities—as always from 'the very best of motives'—are determined to deny him. 'Beer' in most of these settlements can be brewed and sold only in licensed canteens; but few Africans like having to go to a canteen for it. They prefer it at home, brewed by the wife; law or no law, they have it at home. So much so indeed, that the private and illegal brewing of 'beer' may be said to be universal to all these settlements. To suppress it the police drive in at night on patrol-wagons, sirens blaring, armed to the teeth; and rush wildly from house to house, dragging people from their beds, searching them, knocking them around, arresting them for any serious protest. Such proceedings promote fear: and fear promotes hatred.

'Racial tension increased during the year', remarked Mr. Venables, the manager of the Non-European Affairs Department of the Johannesburg Municipality, in his report for 1949: 'The situation is now explosive. . . .'

It was the least he could say. In Krugersdorp, Randfontein, and elsewhere on the West Rand, serious street fighting had broken out between the inhabitants and the police at the end of 1949 and early in 1950. From the report of the inevitable commission appointed to inquire into these riots, it is plain that the action and attitude of the police were primary irritants. It is also plain that the Africans are no longer prepared, as of old, to stand by and see themselves pushed around as the mood of the police may dictate. Even more than the men, it is the women who show a new fighting spirit. 'Native women played a prominent part in all the disturbances. They were always in the forefront in large numbers and by yelling and shrieking egged on their menfolk to fight the police. . . .'⁵³

'An iron barrier is growing up between the Government and the general mass of the Non-Europeans,' commented a speaker in the South African parliament lately.⁵⁴ Behind this barrier the Africans of towns live out their relatively brief lives of fear and violence, submitted to

every foul and sinister influence, but helped by almost no social influence that is good and constructive. Their slums make even the location of Bloemfontein seem a flowering paradise.

The brutality of the police is seldom denied, and upon occasion is even brought to public notice by magistrate's courts. Thus the magistrate at New Hanover, early in 1951, found after post mortem on a young African called Leziwe Gwala, aged sixteen, that he had died from 'asphyxia resulting from mechanical obstruction of the lungs by fluid when Gwala consumed an excessive quantity of water while undergoing police interrogation'. A white policeman, Cornelius van Zyl, was prosecuted.⁵⁵ Some months later the magistrate at Tugela Ferry was 'reluctantly compelled' to find three white policemen guilty of charges of assaulting eight Africans 'by applying electric current to their bodies [with electric cattle prodders], throttling them, slapping their faces and tying their limbs with rope'. The policemen had pleaded not guilty, but the magistrate held that 'taken as a whole the evidence is so rich in detail that it could not possibly have been rehearsed', and, sentenced them to—a fine of £1 or seven days!⁵⁶ It is fair to add, however, that the notorious van Zyl received a sentence of several years.

Yet one would be wrong, as far as I could see, in thinking that these people despair. On the contrary, their nerves seem better than the nerves of most of the white inhabitants of Johannesburg, a city most grievously wracked in its nerves. They make the impression of enjoying life in spite of everything: of holding within themselves reserves of self-confidence: of being convinced that the future will not be as the present, but that they are marching towards a better existence. There is an incredibly large fund of optimism to be found in these unhappy places.

They have come, after all, from a rural life which could promise nothing but hunger and monotony. Here in Johannesburg, on the Rand, they can find work at wages which are far higher than any other African wages: and whatever they may suffer here, they do not suffer monotony. Even though the very Europeans who employ these Africans in their shops and factories are quite capable of holding forth on the need to 'drive these feckless natives back to their Reserves', the facts are plain enough. 'Of 9,260 squatter families (approximately

45,000 people) removed from the Orlando and Alexandra areas to the new camp at Moroka', said the report of the Native Affairs Commission for 1949, 'the heads of 8,659 families were accepted as being employed in Johannesburg. . . . In fact, the vast majority of them are hard-working respectable people who have been readily absorbed into industry but for whom no houses are available.' Plain enough, one would think: and yet I am prepared to say that out of any random twenty people you might stop in Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, and show these phrases to, fifteen would take you for a clown, a 'communistic' agitator, or just a simple liar. The whites, in general, do not yet realize that they cannot operate their new factories without increasing numbers of non-whites. They are still further from realizing that South Africa cannot prosper until the ownership and operation of factories has ceased to be a white monopoly.

If they did, perhaps, they would bestir themselves a little to improve the conditions of the African settlements: even in their own interests. For the conditions out of which have grown such strange and horrible manifestations of maladjustment as *tsotsi*-ism are a menace to the welfare and the future of even the most carefully nurtured little white child of Johannesburg. Disease and violence, as someone has said, do not recognize colour bars—not to speak of the hardening of the moral arteries which early affects those who apply such bars.

It is best to begin with Alexandra. For Alexandra is not a camp, a location, or a temporary settlement. It is a native township, where Africans can (at least in theory) own land and enjoy freehold tenure.

About 80,000 Africans—or more or less, for nobody can say exactly how many—inhabited Alexandra in 1952. Many of them have lived in Alexandra all their lives, for the township grew out of the expansion of manufacturing industry during the first world war. But many others have come to Alexandra during the expansion of industry of the second world war: today its inhabitants count members of many tribes and sects in southern Africa. Like Orlando, which is the 'snob' African settlement of Johannesburg, most of the houses are of brick, properly roofed, and provided each with a little piece of land. There is no private

THE TOWNS

water supply, however, no drainage system, no lighting, and no permanent road surfacing; so that at night these streets are difficult to negotiate even apart from fear of the *tsotsi's* knife. In Alexandra by 1952 the fear of the *tsotsi's* knife had reached a point of tension that was difficult to bear: even so, here as elsewhere, no kind of community defence was being undertaken. To begin with, the law would forbid it; and then this society seems often too demoralized, too disparate, too undeveloped, for even the most primitive forms of social effort and co-operation.

And yet that is not true. For it was in Alexandra that the great bus strikes of 1943 and 1944 were organized, when thousands of African men and women walked twenty miles to work and back for days on end rather than submit. Such was their spirit, indeed, that the bus company was broken thus in its attempt to put a penny on the fare.

In August 1951 inhabitants of Moroka Settlement applied for permission to form their own anti-terrorist guards, who were to be armed with sticks; and the African Youth League met to discuss measures to fight crime. The community sense was clearly growing. And it was from neighbouring Orlando, too, that Mpanza had led out his people over Jordan.

Many interesting people live in Alexandra, though they are not always easy to discover. At one end of the scale you will find, if you look for them, schoolmasters, students, people writing and people painting, members of the African National Congress, the men who would be leaders in the political and trade union life of the Africans if any such life were permitted them. You will find a great mass of ordinary people who are just going back and forth to work every day, rising early to queue for the skeleton bus service and returning late for the same reason. You will find, at the other end of the scale, the bad hats, the *tsotsi*, the *skokiaan queens* who brew strong liquor, the prostitutes and pimps and riff-raff.

Witch-doctoring does good trade. Mr. Msimba, for example, is in the direct line of descent of the more reputable sort of *nyanga*, or medicine-man, practising for good rather than for evil, though not abstaining now and then, no doubt, from a little evil too. At the time I met him, Mr. Msimba and his partner were among the most well-to-

do of medicine-men in all Alexandria. Not for them the clay-whitening of the Reserves, the secrecy, the mumbo-jumbo; they have fully modernized the business.

Mr. Msimba's 'surgery' is unpretentious enough, though he enjoys a corner site. The window is stuffed with strings of 'medicine' in its raw state, and the room itself is also stuffed with these materials, laid out on shelves and purchased, Mr. Msimba explained, through regular wholesale channels. Behind the counter, Mr. Msimba was smiling, courteous, impeccably dressed in good European clothes, with collar and tie, watch-chain, button-hole, and everything complete. Around him there were stacks of various medicines: herbs, skins, teeth, paws of monkeys, the scaly coats of snakes long dead, bundles and buckets of 'things' perhaps better left unknown.

We discussed tariffs. Mr. Msimba was delighted to be helpful. Was he expensive? Mr. Msimba smiled modestly: easy little things, such as aches and pains, the simpler nervous worries, the shallower pitfalls of love . . . no, not expensive. He went into technicalities on the use of rabbit jaws and adder skins which I was unable to follow; but it seemed to come out that ordinary consultations—and Mr. Msimba, it must be grasped, ranks as a doctor and not in the least as a figure of fun or fear—were quite cheap. The bigger things, the really difficult things, the curing of mafufunyana and the like . . . yes, that was heavy work. That came expensive. To begin the cure of mafufunyana, for example, he would expect twenty-five shillings down; and five pounds for the whole course. Rather dear perhaps: but mafufunyana, after all, is no laughing matter. Mafufunyana is widely feared and results often in death, being an especially powerful form of self-hypnosis induced by an acute sense of guilt, or a state of nervous derangement comparable thereto. You may be afflicted with mafufunyana at any time; like a thief in the night your enemy will act and 'the little men' will steal into your head and ceaselessly tell you terrible things. Their coming means that your enemy has laid upon you a mortal spell: unless you can find a doctor who can drive out 'the little men' you will probably go mad and die. The cure is complex, requiring potions consisting partly of ants fed upon human flesh; but Mr. Msimba, apparently, can often pull it off.

Powerful African medicines have often required human flesh; and it is scarcely surprising in Alexandra, where many and perhaps most of the inhabitants subscribe in more or less degree to the upkeep of Mr. Msimba and his fellows, that a lively if illicit trade should be done with the mortuaries. A white friend of mine, and an old friend of Mr. Msimba's, entered his shop one day and found him cutting up pieces of stuff that 'looked like coconut'. Upon being asked about the nature of this stuff, Mr. Msimba gravely replied with two words. 'Lady's flesh,' he said.

All of which goes to show, no doubt, that the Africans are still a superstitious lot, a lot of children . . . and yet the little white boy who received a medal for starving rather than eat food prepared by an Indian? The white man, too, has his 'medicine' and his medicine-men; and it would be hard to say which of the two was the more barbarous or powerful. There can be little doubt as to which of them does the more harm.

Mr. Msimba is a man of substance. As well as his 'surgery', he has his house and motor-car. He is much in demand from clients outside Johannesburg, and was about to depart for Heidelberg on the morning I called. Lower in the social scale, for instance, there is Mrs. R., a widowed sempstress who runs, in common with many other single but respectable women of Alexandra, a profitable little side-line in 'beer'. Mrs. R. is not a woman of substance: she inhabits one room of many that are built in the garden of a freehold house some distance from Mr. Msimba's. A fine and handsome woman of tremendous physique, Mrs. R. is by origin an Ndebele from the western Transvaal: she has lived in Alexandra for nearly twenty years, however, and has buried her husband here during that time. Parts of her story she will tell; but parts, perhaps because they are too violent and too sad, she will not. In these days, at last, she feels that life is being a little kind to her: she has her work as sempstress, her 'beer' connexions, her little room which she keeps nicely clean and sweet, and a circle of respectable friends. Lately she has risen to a position of some managerial importance in the Christian sect to which she is devoted.

Mrs. R. brews beer regularly for friends, and has bottomless contempt

THE URBAN AFRICAN

for the police. Rowdiness, drunkenness, loose behaviour *she will tolerate* at no price; there is no difficulty about that, for Mrs. R. has a strong right arm and a sense of purpose which is monumental. She is practical, dealing with the difficulties of the day one by one, and not nagging herself silly with the past or the future. Somehow or other, she has survived: having survived, she now feels able to deal justly with the trials of life. She is, in short, one of those many African women whose personalities have managed to remain whole and sound in spite of every discouragement and persecution; and this to a point which seems much less often found among the men. She is smiling all the time, and walks about the muddy little yard outside her room as if it were the most respectable street in Johannesburg, which it is certainly not. By the daily miracle of Mrs. R. and her kind, humanity survives in Alexandra.

Mrs. R. locked the door, satisfied herself by a smiling straight look that I was a trustworthy and proper person to sample her 'beer', and laid the table with glasses and a jug of stuff that looked like a mixture of thin porridge and camomile lotion. Its taste was both sweet and sour, cooling, rather pleasant, and its alcoholic content was probably less than that of the draught bitter you will get in an English pub. But brewing is strictly illegal except in the township's canteen, and the police would have arrested Mrs. R. if they had come upon her, thrown her into goal, fined her.

Mrs. R. does not bother with the police. She pursues her quiet respectable way, a pillar of the church, a popular hostess where three or four may come together for a little society, a sempstress of ingenuity and skill.

'Nevertheless, a volcanic situation,' says Mr. Nkosi, who knows of what he speaks, 'and getting worse . . .'

The *tsotsis* and the other grim products of an abandoned slum society . . . the police and the violence of white prejudice and hatred . . . their own worries and hatreds: all these things and others like them drive the inhabitants of Alexandra to a pitch of desperation. But beneath these unpleasant growths and excrescences from urban society, there is the structure of that society itself. There is, for example, the matter of rents, of overcrowding.

THE TOWNS

Alexandra contains about 2,500 freehold plots or 'stands', as they are called in South Africa. At first sight it looks as if the urbanized African has at last acquired security of tenure: but first appearances, as so often in this country, are misleading. The idea of establishing a native township, as distinct from a location, was good and even generous all those years ago: typically enough, however, the idea could not be carried through. Africans flocked to Alexandra, of course, because there the controls upon their daily and domestic lives were less severe. The price of ground—in the words of the Native Laws Commission of 1948—soared 'to the skies', and overcrowding became at once a serious question. 'In Alexandra *erven* of 140 feet by 80 feet have been sold for £500. The purchasers borrow the money, often at high rates of interest, and then in order to be able to find the interest on the purchase price, build rooms over the whole area of the *erven* and let these rooms at high rentals. . . .'

Where Mrs. R. lives, for example, the 'freeholder' has built nearly a score of rooms on his little plot of ground, so that there is scarcely room to walk between them. These rooms are leased at rents which vary between 35s. and 60s. a month, which would seem to yield the 'freeholder' a handsome profit. Africans exploiting Africans? Up to a point, yes: but it happens that the 'freeholder' in this case is heavily in bond—and the bondholder is a white man of Johannesburg. I am told on good authority that almost all the 2,500 'freeholders' of Alexandra are heavily bonded, and that the bonds are held by about fifty individuals and building societies, most of these being white men or controlled by white men.

Ruthless exploitation of slum properties has been a general practice, although South Africa, of course, is scarcely unique in this. In the since-demolished Johannesburg slum of Rooiyard, for example, it was found that rents were so high, and overcrowding so great, that the gross return on the price the owner was said to have paid for it was no less than 132 per cent; the return on the municipal valuation, which was higher than the supposed purchase price, was 74 per cent after all tax and surcharge costs were met. Rooiyard, at that time, consisted of five 'stands', or residential sites; but these had been built upon to the extent of 107

rooms and one shop, and the rooms were being let at 40s. a month. Male wages were at an average of about 18s. 1d. a week, for this was before the great industrial expansion of the war years; but most incomes were being supplemented by illicit beer-brewing. Rooiyard, indeed, was a typical 'Skokiaan-yard' where 'adultery, illegitimacy and prostitution, even if not completely condoned, are accepted as social norms. . . .'⁵⁷

The good and generous idea in Alexandra has in any case gone the way of others of its kind in South Africa. Instead of creating a township of 2,500 free-holding families, bourgeois, respectable, law-abiding, and 'fit for civilization', the white man's way has once more created a most nauseating urban slum. In a township intended for 2,500 families, there is probably a population today of about 15,000 families; there would be many more if space permitted their insertion.

The township is administered somewhat vaguely by a 'Health Committee', to which, however, only two residents are elected. Once again, instead of throwing up the beginnings of African local government, and giving Africans the sense and use of responsibility in self-management, Alexandra is 'managed' mainly by the whites.

The management, it must be said, leaves a good deal to be desired, though that is largely because the management is deprived of adequate funds. Disease, true enough, is less serious in the towns of the Rand than elsewhere in South Africa. By 1947 the African death rate from tuberculosis had risen in 'English' Durban to something more than 900 per 100,000, probably among the highest in the world; it was almost as high in Port Elizabeth and East London; while in Cape Town it stood at something between 500 and 600.⁵⁸ The truly appalling nature of these figures can be measured to some extent by remembering that the white death rate from T.B. in South Africa is much under 40 per 100,000, while the death rate in war-shattered Warsaw in 1946 was 135, and in London in the same year 64. In 1939, furthermore, the T.B. death rate for 'urban natives' was about *half* its present figure. This is a society, literally enough, which is stricken with 'galloping tuberculosis'.

On the Rand, things were and are somewhat better. According to reliable information prepared for me Chief Health Inspector of Alex-

THE TOWNS

andra Township the death rate for pulmonary T.B. for all non-Europeans in the nine main towns of the Rand (including Alexandra) was 144 per 100,000, compared with a European rate for these towns of 13 per 100,000; while the comparable rates for non-pulmonary T.B. were 34 and 5. These figures represent yearly averages for the period 1944-6, and they do not include 'mine boys'.

As regards the general rate of child mortality on the Rand, it is worth noting that Dr. Ellen Hellman found in Rooiyard that 100 women whose cases she investigated (and many of whom were still of child-bearing age) had had 360 children, of whom 121 had died. This inquiry was made in 1934, and the slum of Rooiyard no longer exists: yet there is nothing to show that the position in other slums today is any better. Indeed, there is evidence for believing that it may be a good deal worse. 'The deplorable conditions appertaining here,' wrote Dr. L. W. Adler, Medical Officer of Health for Benoni, of African and Asiatic housing in his report for the year ending June 1950, 'and reported upon in report after report, continue unabated.'

During the second world war Alexandra and Orlando became crammed and crowded with the workers of South Africa's developing industries to the point when overflow was inevitable. The owners of South Africa's expanding industries being unwilling to notice how their indispensable workers might live or die when not actually at work, the overflow took place on its own. It took place, that is, under the leadership of energetic individuals. One of the most notable of these was Mpanza Sofazonke, whose name, being translated, means, Let-Us-All-Die-Together. . . .

MOROKA

THOSE who were present when Mpanza Let-Us-All-Die-Together led out his people from the land of Egypt and, as he said at the time, crossed the Jordan to the Promised Land, report that the whole affair was deeply impressive. The land of Egypt, for the purposes of Mpanza, was the overcrowded bondage of Alexandra and Orlando, and the Jordan was the comb which lies beneath that hillside; and the Promised Land was the other hillside, where now stands the settlement of Moroka, which was founded then.

They went out one dark night with Mpanza at their head, a traipsing line of about a hundred people with their children and their household goods and their dogs and all the things that they had; and within a week, such was the rush to follow them to the place where they had squatted, Moroka held upwards of 15,000 people camping on the bare hillside. At the end of the first week they called a meeting, and Mpanza spoke to the notables of the African community of Johannesburg, and the people sang and many spoke and spoke; and at the end there were parties of men and women singing and ululating in the night, stamping their feet to the rhythm, thumping the earth, waving their glowing torches. But the song they sang that memorable night was a new song, and it held only one brief verse, but the brief verse had much to say:

God bless our land
That was taken from us by strangers:
Zulu, Msuto, Xosa, stand united!

The meeting went on all night and much was said, but there was no disorder; and by happy fortune the police stayed away. But not for long. The Municipal Council, although the Labour Party had then a majority, duly gave the order for the shelters of these totally un-

THE TOWNS

authorized squatters to be pulled down. When the Municipal police came out to carry through these orders, they were stoned by the crowd (who were, it seems, mostly women), and two of them were killed. The rest took refuge in a neighbouring communal hall, where they were besieged until morning. . . . In the end, the 'squat' had to be recognized for what it was, and Moroka was entered on the books. Other 'squats' were less fortunate. When the Springbok Legion (which included many African ex-servicemen) brought out tenants from the suburb of Pimville, their 'squat' was outlawed by the police. This place, which the squatters named Tobruk, became accordingly outside the law, and very soon was subject to the whims of strong-arm men from among its own inhabitants.

But Moroka, even so, was somehow founded. Although the settlement was clearly illegal, since natives were squatting on European land, there could be no question of moving it. The good burghers of Johannesburg perceived that they might well be able to expel these people: there was absolutely nowhere else they could settle them. So they allowed them to stay; and, after a time, declared that 'municipal order' must be established in this place.

'Municipal order' was gradually established. Thousands more were pouring into Moroka—today there are more than 40,000 people in the settlement—so the first thing to do was to erect a high wire fence around the encampment. This neither kept the inhabitants from going out, nor new people from crowding in; but it looked orderly, and was highly municipal. After that there was a lull until the good burghers could think what next to do. The industrial revolution was down on them with a vengeance, you must remember, and they, good people, needed time to get their bearings: nothing on this scale, after all, had ever happened before. So the lull persisted, and Mpanza, who was of an elevated disposition, raised himself to the status of dictator on a white horse, and something like a reign of terror began.

Little by little the good burghers discovered by diligent research what things besides a wire fence were necessary to 'municipal order'. It was all pioneering ground, you understand. . . . They passed a rule to the effect that any *bona fide* squatter might squat upon a piece of bare

MOROKA

earth twenty foot square in exchange for a rental of ten shillings a month: but the squatter, naturally, would have to build his own house in any spare time that his white employer might be good enough to allow him, and no materials would be provided. This explains why 'municipal order' in Moroka has given rise to an astonishing variety of building materials, from old kerosene tins flattened and linked together to mud and plaster, bits of timber, sacking and old rags, and here and there a few precious bricks.

There need be no lighting, of course. There was none, after all, in the other native settlements. For what could a native want with lighting? He didn't read; and it was better that he shouldn't read, for reading put 'ideas' into a man's head; and Africans were too undeveloped, it was well known, for 'ideas'. . . . By the same token, there needn't be any social amenities, libraries, cinemas, places of public amusement, tarred roads, sidewalks, trees, benches, parks . . . such things would only make the native lazy. God knows, he was lazy enough already.

Water and sanitation, yes: up to a point. It couldn't be private, of course, because the employers of these people could not possibly face the cost of housing them. So the good burghers reached down into their municipal pockets and footed the huge bill required to supply public water taps and public lavatories at the lavish rate, on present showing, of one lavatory seat for every two or three hundred people, and one water tap for about twice that number. These lavatories and taps are now established in long lines which run through the settlement.

The burghers of Johannesburg went even further. They are busy men in big motor cars; but they were not blind to the needs of Moroka. There would have to be schooling: there is schooling—about 4,000 children in school, and 18,000, for lack of places and teachers, out of it. Most of the schools, let it be whispered, are a first charge upon the missionaries and not the municipality.

They extended to Moroka, furthermore, the protection of the law. Almost any night of the week, but especially at week-ends, the police are round in heavily armed patrols to make certain that nobody is brewing 'beer' (but everybody is brewing 'beer'), and to roust people out of bed in case they have forgotten, even in their sleep, to provide

themselves with one or other of the many passes which alone, it seems, can prove an African free from malice or intent to rape and murder. There is little that the native understands, it is said, better than a good crack on the skull in the middle of the night. The police are so busy about this important work that they have, unhappily, no time to deal with the *tsotsis*, so that Moroka is terrorized for all the hours of darkness; and dances at Mr. Kotze's community centre have to go on until dawn.

Transport there must also be, and even commerce. Bus services were established to run between Moroka and the white man's place of work: but it would be wrong to make life *too* easy for these natives, and so the number of buses was limited to about a tenth of the number which a white community of comparable numbers would require, thus restoring a certain measure of proportion and ensuring that 'municipal order' should not become wildly utopian, not to say 'communitic'. Commerce was represented in 1951 by a handful of shops. Since most of the people of Moroka go out to work ('of 9,260 squatter families . . . at Moroka . . . the heads of 8,659 families were accepted as being employed in Johannesburg . . .'), there grew up the feeding system known as the *café de move-on*.

The *café de move-on* is necessary to the workers of Moroka (and of other settlements) if they are not to go without food throughout the day, or are to bring their daily meal with them. For there are few African restaurants or eating places of any kind in Johannesburg; and it is outside the factory gates, after all, that the need is greatest. The white man may be decent enough to allow the black man to do his hard work for him: it would be altogether too much to expect him to have a crowd of natives actually eating in the streets. So the *café de move-on* failed, and fails, to meet the requirements of 'municipal order'. After all, it is no more than a street canteen, rather like the winkle stall and barrow of Hampstead Heath on fair days, where natives buy bread or cake and coffee. They ought to know better than to eat such stuff, of course: they ought to learn the elements of dietetic science and purchase health-giving foods instead of stuffing themselves with bread. . . . But natives, of course, are little better than children: rather than eat nothing they eat bread. . . .

MOROKA

The municipal authorities, accordingly, declared war on the *cafés de move-on*, and said that these little coffee-carts must vanish from the streets. They were, it seems, desperately 'unhygienic'. The authorities forgot, it is true, to suggest how famished African factory workers might otherwise obtain a hot drink in the middle of the day, but municipal authorities are busy people and cannot be expected to think of everything. Soon after the end of the war, the authorities began prosecuting the owners of *cafés de move-on* who had failed to move on.

The first shot in this war was not the last. A few days before Christmas, 1946, a long line of coffee-carts pulled up beside the City Hall, perhaps as many as 500 of them. They were carrying placards which informed the people of the city that they, the coffee-cart proprietors, were the men who fed the Africans of the city, a proposition which nobody could deny no matter how undesirable it might seem that Africans should be eating in the city at all. The long line of coffee-carts looked like staying there all day; and the proprietors and everyone within earshot were informed of the facts of the case by Senator Basner, one of the seven white representatives of the Africans in Parliament and a man whose reputation stood rightly high among them. After an hour or so of this the Mayor capitulated; and there were no more prosecutions that year. Later the 'provisional permission' of the municipal authorities for coffee-carts to sell their wares was extended year by year until 1950: in the meantime, it was understood the authorities would provide proper canteens where the Africans could be weaned from this stuffing-with-bread nonsense and introduced to a proper diet. Alas, there were doubtless too many other important matters to think of: for the canteens were forgotten. Late in 1950, when there were still no municipal canteens nor the merest sign of municipal canteens, the authorities started prosecuting again. After all, the mayor and council had changed in the meantime; and it would be unreasonable to expect the new authorities to plough through the interminable records of what their predecessors might have done or left undone.

The owners of the *cafés de move-on*, meanwhile, that feckless wicked lot of bread-and-coffee vendors, had actually clubbed together, about 200 of them, and established their own co-operative for making bread.

THE TOWNS

There was no saying where this sort of 'communistic' subversion might stop. The authorities were alarmed: sternly, and from the best of motives, they began once more to drive the *cafés de move-on* from the streets. This war, at time of writing, is still in progress.

Such is Moroka, the settlement which Mpanza Let-Us-All-Die-Together helped to found, and the good burghers of Johannesburg have maintained. Mpanza is no longer a power there (though I believe he flourishes in neighbouring Orlando); others have taken up his burden where it was laid down, however, and the reign of terror continues. In this respect Moroka is like all the other settlements of Johannesburg, although in many physical respects it is by far the least decorative: in nearby Jabavu, where the municipality has erected neat prefabricated houses, nine rooms to each and three rooms to a family (with family rents at 22s. 6d. a week), in Orlando, Alexandra, Western Native Township, Pimville . . . the reign of terror, from *tsotsi* and from policeman, continues as before.

These scattered excerpts from the African treadmill will convey an impression of sordid poverty. Such facts tend to be sordid. People hungry, people unwashed, people without privacy: the story is the same whether you tell it of the slums of southern Italy or the settlements of South Africa. Such facts are not new: humanity has abandoned along its trail great heaps of them, stale, hateful, crying for burial, and the stench of them rises out of the vellum of the most respectable of histories. But in South Africa, as in Spain or southern Italy or parts of London, these facts are not the same in life as they seem to be in the telling. The wretchedness, poverty, lack of privacy, exposure to shame and ridicule and suffering, all these things are there: yes, but with all these, and stubbornly, a deep inward wave and onward surge of hope and self-belief.

The Africans of South Africa, cursed with slum dwelling though they be, are not hopeless or sordid or repellent. But for a perverted handful of them, they are not savage or cruel or naturally given to violence. They are full of life. They are eager for learning. They are the most interesting and exciting group of people to be found in that country.

Their ideas, their reflexes, are wider and more alive than anything that is usually to be found beneath the money-conscious snobbery of whites who seem too often unable to wrench themselves free from the evil magic of their social climate. Break in upon a conversation between white women, and within five minutes you are back at the servant question, nagging at others, nagging at yourself. I can still remember with pain a moment in Basutoland, pausing on the summit of a hill with long-ranging mountains in the distance, in the middle of a talk with my European host about the people of that land, and being interrupted by a feminine grumble from the back of the car: 'Why don't they make the women carry passes—that's what I can't understand? Then we wouldn't have such trouble with them.' It is as if the land and its problems—and its possibilities, such magnificent and manifold possibilities—were too big for these white men and women, asked too much of their imagination, too much of their meagre faith in humanity. Driven in upon themselves, the white people of South Africa have come to believe securely in nothing, not even in themselves.

But the African people of South Africa, though harried and harassed in a manner that would bring the white housewife and her husband to the brink of suicide within twenty-four hours, have steeled their nerves. They defend themselves from the degrading circumstances in which they must live, daily, hourly, with a mute determination to survive. And out of this mute determination there comes a firm and even gay acceptance of life, a saying yes to life with all its errors and its hope, a deep if wordless knowledge that the future will not be as the past has been, and that the world will one day give them their heritage in civilization.

What that civilization will be like may need much imagining. But even now, here and there, signs emerge. The songs, the dancing, the laughter, the love of jokes, the sense of tragedy and sorrow, the deep seriousness that lives in Africans when they are good human beings as well: all these point to an inner richness and a variety that will one day bring forth fruit of its own, and contribute a new thing to the story of humanity. African civilization may follow the same laws of society as other civilizations: but its form and savour will be like nothing that the

THE TOWNS

world has seen. Already the Africans reach forth, tentatively, half afraid, for their heritage, their place in history. While many white men and women sneer and jeer and hide their own moral emptiness, Africans begin to take the first shapes of their civilized consciousness from the melting pot of their traditions and imaginings. These shapes are new and strange and sometimes shocking to the uninitiated, not like the shapes of suave Europe: but they are authentic, real, brimming with energy.

And so it comes about that the average inhabitant of these African slums is not a moron or a murderer, but your Mrs. R., sober, respectable, optimistic, steadily saying yes to life despite the most hideous discouragement. Or your Mr. Simale, resident of Moroka, who is earning the comparatively great wealth of £6 5s. a *week* (think of the 'mine boy' at only two-thirds of that a *month*, or the farm workers who have to work for the best part of a *year* to see as much cash); and feels that life is good and worth while in spite of all the *tsotsis* and the policemen in the world. Mr. Simale, it is true, does a good deal better than most; but the minority which does as well as this, or nearly as well, is not a small one, and is growing fast.

However unpalatable it may be to white men in British African territories who turn up their noses at what happens in the Union, the fact remains that nowhere else south of the Equator can an African earn as much, with patience and a strong stomach, as he can earn in the racial misery of Johannesburg. Mr. Simale, for example, already has a house partially built of brick by his own efforts, a house with two rooms and with furniture; already he is able to afford a broiled goat—as he had the day I met him—for the enjoyment of his friends and neighbours; already he feels the ground firmer beneath his feet. 'We must not complain,' he was saying cautiously when we parted. 'We must just do our best.' And there was more than mere caution in this—the caution of a non-white man talking to a white man—there was the sentiment, barely expressed but strongly latent, that Mr. Simale and his kind would come in the end through this valley of the shadow, and would stride out one day into the sunlight.

Meanwhile, to many, the sunlight seems far away. After parting from

MOROKA

Mr. Simale, Mr. Nkosi and I walked down *through the dusty alleys of* Moroka so that Mr. Nkosi could show me the communal lavatories. People busy on the threshold of their shanties, or grovelling over some work or other in the dust outside, stared at us or ignored us. There was the impression of faces peeping through holes poked in piles of rubbish, the memory of Gorki's description—I think in *The Lower Depths*—of a pauper's colony in Tsarist Russia as of a jumble of tin cans, cases, and lumps of timber kicked pell-mell to the bottom of a hill and then inhabited. And after that a much broader alley, running laterally through the settlement, and the little clumps of water taps dripping in the dust, with women drawing water, and the long line of public lavatories. . . .

And here we met a man who spoke to us of his own initiative. A native. He spoke to Mr. Nkosi in Zulu, a language which Mr. Nkosi understands.

I said to Mr. Nkosi: 'Tell him I want to look into one of those lavatories, will you? Ask him if people would mind that.'

This native was an elderly man with a straggling grey beard and a merry face. He was dressed in the rags of a mechanic's overalls.

'Does he mind?' I urged Mr. Nkosi.

Mr. Nkosi was talking to the native, the 'urbanized native'. After a while he answered my question, and was gently sarcastic. Much mixing with white men has given Mr. Nkosi, who is a 'educated native' but not an 'agitator', an almost crushing power of understatement. Mr. Nkosi's gentle sarcasm is all the more sarcastic for being gentle.

'No, he doesn't mind,' Mr. Nkosi said, 'he is pleased.'

'What else does he say?'

'He asks,' Mr. Nkosi said, 'whether or not we have come to beat anyone up. He says he would like to know, because then he will go away before we begin.'

It was all very quiet, orderly, matter-of-fact. There was the 'urbanized native' and there was the visiting white man with his African guide: they might, it is true, have come on peaceful business, but then again they might not. . . .

In South Africa there are nearly two million 'urbanized natives'.

THE IMPACT OF INDUSTRIALISM

IN summing up the impact of industrialism on the social patterns of South Africa, the case of the *café de move-on* can reliably be generalized. Faced with an influx into the towns of greatly needed non-white labour, municipal authorities have tried, and try, to meet their new problems with the old familiar answers. Though more and more clearly confronted with the fact of a plural community, they steadfastly refuse to recognize the plurality; and, refusing thus, refuse also to accept the only logical conclusion of this industrial expansion, which is the community living of white and non-white. With inflexible determination, accordingly, they pursue the established doctrine of segregation. Since the needs of the situation conflict increasingly with the scope of this doctrine, their fear and hatred of the non-whites grow: in measure with this growing white fear and hatred of the non-whites, there is correspondingly invoked a growing fear and hatred of the non-whites for the whites. African politics, here and there, become African chauvinism. Provoked by white nationalism, African nationalism tends to become aggressive. Politically advanced voices among the Africans, regularly persecuted by the whites as 'communistic', become fainter.

The old familiar answers of segregation have reached back to the very beginnings of white settlement in southern Africa. Once the attempt to exclude from Cape Colony 'all natives'—that is, all Bantu—had failed in the latter part of the eighteenth century, there could be no alternative but community living or segregation; and the settlers, backed by Government, took to segregation like ducks to water. Later still, when it became clear that complete segregation was utterly impracticable, the British Government introduced the reserve system on a deliberate plan—just as the Boer farmers had already introduced it haphazardly. Thus the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Earl Grey, could

THE IMPACT OF INDUSTRIALISM

write in 1849 to the gallant Sir Harry Smith, then Governor of the Cape, that permanent locations should be established—in this context in Natal—on a pattern such that ‘each European would thus have it in his power to draw supplies of labour from the location in his more immediate proximity’.

From that time down to this the establishment and regulation of urban locations runs in a direct line. The underlying theory—if so big a word as theory can be applied to so frantic and muddled a procedure—was well defined by the famous Stallard Commission of 1921. ‘We consider that the history of the races, especially having regard to South African history,’ declared that Commission with an assurance that the Nationalists would later emulate, ‘shows that the commingling of black and white is undesirable. The native should only be allowed to enter urban areas, which are essentially the white man’s creation, when he is willing to enter and to minister to the needs of the white man, and should depart therefrom when he ceases so to minister.’ A splendidly frank statement, indeed, wherein one clearly reads the belief that community living would open for the white man an irresistible temptation to cohabit with the non-white woman—after all, it happened before, whence the million-strong Euro-African community of today: but a statement which leaves unsolved every important problem of South African society.

The system of urban living thus defined by the Stallard Commission has been designed to serve the white man’s needs with a regular supply of cheap labour, but to keep this cheap labour residentially separate from the white man’s habitation. Now, so long as the white man needed in his towns only crossing-sweepers, ‘night-soil boys’, domestic servants, and the like, the system might do well enough. By the application of force on the part of the authorities, and the observance of a certain law-breaking tolerance by white employers, the system could be made to work. More or less. But only more or less.

Consider, for example, the case of married domestic servants. Every white household in South Africa has domestic servants, and often two or three of them. In the towns, the law says that a married African woman employed as a domestic servant may not cohabit with her husband on

her employer's premises. If she did, there would be children: there would be community living in no time. And community living is not to be tolerated. As soon as she ceases to 'minister to' her mistress's needs, the African cook must depart. . . . That is what the law says, and what the authorities enforce. But in practice this law goes so contrary to common sense that employers do not always enforce it. They allow their cooks to 'receive' their husbands. Otherwise there would be an acute shortage of cooks. . . .

'Early the other morning,' wrote a white woman one day in 1951, 'I was awakened by the ringing of my front-door bell. On opening the door I was met by a man in civvy clothes who announced that he was a policeman, and asked whether I employed a native female domestic servant. I answered that I did, and he then told me (did not ask me, be it noted) to tell her to open her room.

'She did so and the policeman, finding the girl's husband in the room, arrested him for being unlawfully on the premises. He then marched the native off to join a number of other natives who were under arrest, apparently on a similar charge.

'All the householders concerned were probably aware that their native female servants were "harbouring" their husbands, but they had not taken active steps to prevent this, because to do so would have meant being unable to obtain the services of a female servant. . . .

'I had made every possible effort to obtain a permit to enable my servant's husband to share a room with her, but without success, despite the fact that the woman and her husband are married by Christian rites, and are quiet, law-abiding, do not have other natives to visit them, and do not drink. The husband has a responsible position with a firm for which he has worked for a long time. Living respectably with his wife, he was nonetheless continually in fear that he would eventually be arrested. . . .'⁵⁹

The system works, but only because individuals are prepared to deny the sense of the laws from time to time. And this sort of order in chaos could continue so long as the South African economy remained typically colonial in character—so long as South Africa was largely content to sell her raw materials to the Mother Country and take in exchange

THE IMPACT OF INDUSTRIALISM

the manufactured goods she needed. Today, the Nationalists are perhaps doubly eager for economic independence. They want to have their own manufacturing industries. Wanting this, they have gone far to change the character of the South African economy. Its primarily colonial character disappears: is displaced, more and more, by a 'home-made' capitalism in rapid growth. And the old system, the Stallard system, finally breaks down before the demand for a regular and growing supply of industrial labour.

The domestic servant, after all, has not needed the *café de move-on*, for he or she can pick the scraps from the master's kitchen: but the factory worker, without the means of getting a midday meal, will soon grow sick and listless, inefficient, incapable of work. . . . Undernourished in any case to the point of partial inefficiency, the industrial worker without the *café de move-on* (or a substitute) will rapidly become undernourished to the point of complete inefficiency. Already, 'he shows clear signs of deficiency (in diet) as soon as he accepts employment involving strenuous exertion. . . .'⁶⁰

But the municipal authorities, in whose hands throughout South Africa the administration of the 'urbanized native' almost exclusively rests, care generally for none of these things. They, at any rate, are still living in the high old times of the Stallard Commission. Let the native—industrial worker or no—enter the white man's areas and 'minister to' the white man's needs: after that let him make himself scarce as quickly as possible. When faced with the hard facts of a particular situation, true enough, men even of Nationalist persuasion now begin to understand the need for a fundamental readjustment in their attitude; but they still remain apparently incapable of transferring their understanding from the particular to the general. The Commission of Inquiry into the Witziesshoek 'disturbances', for one glaring example of this, recommended in 1951 that measures be taken, *inter alia*, to enable the permanent urban settlement of Africans, 'especially in large industrial centres such as the Witwatersrand . . .': but the same men, in other circumstances, remain racials who discuss *apartheid* as if *apartheid* were a real and possible 'solution'. They will advocate, in general, that 'urban natives' be channelled back to the rural Reserves. On the very day that

THE TOWNS

the Witzieshoek report was published, for example, Dr. Malan in Parliament advocated just that.

The contemporary revolution in South Africa, transforming the economy from a primarily imperialist pattern to one of expanding industrialism, overturns all the old assumptions about the white man and the black man: but this is a lesson that is scarcely perceived, far yet learnt. Men like van Eck have learnt it, no doubt, and understand its implications: but even men like van Eck still stickle at community living, and suggest such half-way solutions as enforced 'zonal areas' where the interests of the white man, necessarily in the circumstances, would remain supreme.

In the event, the doctrinaires of racial segregation in both languages continue to prate of the need for 'new native urban areas', while the practical men of affairs, in Government or out of it, continue to take no notice. Between the two of them, urban African settlements continue to be the places of squalor they have always been.

Left thus to themselves, the economic forces now powerfully in play produce their own results. The old system breaks down: the new system takes its place by the blind power of circumstance. Moroka settlement represents the illegal squatting of forty or fifty thousand Africans on the very doorstep of Johannesburg, tearing a great rent in the 'minister and depart' doctrine of the Stallard system: yet Moroka settlement remains on the white man's doorstep, and cannot possibly be kicked or spirited away. The *cafés de move-on* are an insult and offence to all the rules of white segregation: yet they cannot be banished, and, if they are, something equivalent must be put in their place. The law continues to arrest African husbands who sleep with their lawful wives on white premises: yet the practice becomes more and more common.

But it is Moroka, above all, that offers the most glaring example of this refusal to face facts. Established in 1946, Moroka today is the dormitory of thousands of essential workers: without them the employers of Johannesburg would face an immediate labour crisis. Even so, after seven years, Moroka is still no more than a squatters' camp, and white investment has constructed not one single residence in that place. The economic revolution is left to take its own uncontrolled and cruel

THE IMPACT OF INDUSTRIALISM

course: the 'advanced civilization' of white South Africa washes its hands of the whole affair. Is this course wasteful, is it barbarous, is it suicidal in the end? No matter—nothing, apparently, can be done to guide and modify it.

And yet the irresistible forces of economic integration move on their way; and Mr. Simale, African worker, begins to earn £6 5s. a week and to know new needs, and think new thoughts, and nurse new ambitions . . . and to feel, little by little, that power, saving power, comes slowly to his hand.

PART THREE

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

FUROR MALANICUS

'IT'S not the criticism from abroad that we mind,' said the Director of State Information in Cape Town. 'It's the *unfair* criticism. . . .'

And he smiled reprovingly. These foreigners. . . .

It was a reproof, after all, in the high old tradition of Boer obscurantism. Wasn't it Retief himself, the great Retief, who complained in the unforgettable Manifesto of 1837 that British criticism was fed by the testimony of 'interested and dishonest persons, under the cloak of religion, which testimony is believed in England to the exclusion of all evidence in our favour'? Believing themselves God's elect, the Boers could never stomach the 'unjustifiable odium' that their slave-driving customs provoked. That is easy to understand.

Dr. Otto du Plessis, Director of State Information in 1951, may or may not believe himself the elected of God. He is a suave and sociable man in middle age, with eyes rather too close together and a long sharp nose, and a great writer of pamphlets. His most important pamphlet was published in 1940, and formed, according to the authorities, the basis for the 'Draft Constitution for the Republic' which Nationalists later sponsored. It is a pamphlet which still makes interesting reading, although its style is not, perhaps, its greatest recommendation. It was called *The New South Africa: The Revolution of the Twentieth Century*; and conveyed tremendous news to its readers. In 1914, wrote Dr. du Plessis, 'no one could have imagined that within a single generation democracy would actually be wiped out of the whole of Europe. Whatever the result of the war may be'—this was the latter part of 1940—'and fairly few people entertain any doubt about the matter, it is clear the pre-war democracies will be superseded by a new order, not only in Europe alone but throughout the whole world.'

What did Dr. du Plessis mean by 'new order'? The 'new order',

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

apparently, was inspired by 'a totalitarian conception, which finds expression in a disciplined system of government in which all power is concentrated in a Party or a leader, who is the personification of the whole nation, and who interprets through his will the view of life or ideology of the nation'. The philosophy which underlies the 'new order', we read further, is 'undiluted and unequivocal nationalism: Nation and Fatherland come before everything else'. Afrikanerdom, 'the only real nation in the Union', adds Dr. du Plessis, 'pines for the new system of a new order, which would bring with it true national freedom in all spheres of life'. The 'anti-national elements', finally, and 'without any regard to persons, will be given short commons in the interests of the national community'.

Dr. du Plessis, in brief, was pining for Hitler to win the war. But he was doing it in the best of company. 'A wonderful future awaits Afrikanerdom,' said Dr. Malan himself at one point in those hopeful years: 'Germany will want a government sympathetic to itself . . . the Nationalist Party can fill that role.' Mr. Eric Louw, later Minister for Economic Development and South African delegate to the United Nations, declared in July 1940 that: 'General Smuts must give way for a Nationalist Government and the next day we shall negotiate with Germany and Italy for peace.' Mr. Ben Schoeman, at that time the Nationalist Member of Parliament for Fordsburg and at present the Nationalist Minister of Labour, urged at Bloemfontein on November 5, 1940, that no less than 'the whole future of Afrikanerdom is dependent upon a German victory'. At this time, indeed, the Nationalist leaders were all agog with hopes of Hitler. They were not neutral; they were as actively pro-Nazi as circumstances would permit.

But not for long. Came 1942, and a change. Two years earlier a Mr. J. H. Grobler, another Nationalist Member of Parliament, had asked 'how anybody with a normal mind can say that it will be possible for Britain to land forces somewhere in Europe, to expel Germany from the occupied countries, and thereafter defeat Germany on her own soil?' But by 1942 Hitler had taken a terrible mauling on the Eastern Front: the United States had declared war: Britain was still inviolate. 'The Afrikaner who bases his hopes on a German victory,' said Dr.

Malan in 1942, 'is an untrustworthy coward.' Father turned: so did nearly everyone else. And so did Dr. du Plessis.

'Do you still agree,' I asked him, 'with the views expressed in your pamphlet of 1940?'

He laughed engagingly. Everything, it seemed, had a simple explanation. In 1940 many of the 'best elements' in the Nationalist Party were being won over to the Nazi extremists of the Ossewa Brandwag. It was necessary that the Party should defend itself. He had been, Dr. du Plessis assured me, 'absolutely objective'. The whole idea of the pamphlet, he was happy to say, had been to gain a hearing from the extremists and, 'by means of a gentle curvature, to bring pro-Nazi elements back into the Party, and away from the Ossewa Brandwag'.

'South Africa needed no new order, 'because we have our own South African order based on nationalism'.

No party, indeed not even Hitler's very own, would seem to have employed the tactic of the 'gentle curvature' with such swerve and speed as the Nationalists of South Africa.

Such curvatures, no matter how gentle, were bound to have an unsettling effect on relations between the two great European language groups in the Union. Ousted from power by economic pressure in the early 'thirties, the more extreme Nationalists were bitterly disappointed at the evil fortune which robbed them of their hopes of dictatorship at the same time as it robbed Hitler of his hopes of victory. But they were still determined to get back if they possibly could; and, by means fair and not so fair, they eventually did get back in 1948. Frustration from years in the wilderness, traditions which had not forgotten or forgiven the rapacious shamelessness of the Jameson Raid and the South African War, irritation at the miscalculations of the war years—all these things brought their anti-English sentiment to boiling point. Once they were in, they were determined that, this time, they should not be put out again.

The English-speaking inhabitants of the Union were ill equipped to deal with this mounting tide of resentment. They felt themselves every bit as 'South African' as the Afrikaans-speaking inhabitants, but they felt also their ties with England. It is not perhaps without significance

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

that the English-speaking people of the Union refer to themselves as 'Europeans', even when they are South African by two or three generations; while the Afrikaans-speaking people refer to themselves as 'whites'. 'We have nowhere else to go,' say the Afrikaners: 'but you *English* can always go back to England'; and, psychologically, there is no doubt something in it.

Had the English-speaking community consisted of an energetic and forward-looking group they might have known better how to gain allies in the Afrikaans-speaking community. As it was, they reflected in many ways the same attachment to tradition and the sentiment of the past, however wrongheaded, as the Boers. If most Afrikaners could still feel a sense of bitter injustice at the British invasion of their Republics in the north, most Englishmen could still admit within their hearts that Rhodes and Jameson and the rest, in provoking that war, were true blue Englishmen and heroes every inch of them. 'Gad, sir, I'd have done the same,' may one day be the Englishman's epitaph south of the Zambezi. Not for nothing had Alfred Austin, Poet Laureate at the time of the Jameson Raid, approved the gallant captain:

Wrong! Is it wrong? Well, may be:
But I'm going, boys, all the same.
Do they think me a burgher's baby,
To be scared by a scolding name?
They may argue, and prate, and order;
Go, tell them to save their breath;
Then, over the Transvaal border,
And gallop for life or death!

And how many Englishmen in South Africa would deny the sentiment of the last verse of this immortal ode?

I suppose we were wrong, were madmen,
Still I think at the Judgment Day,
When God sifts the good from the bad men,
There'll be something more to say.
We were wrong, but we aren't half sorry,

FUROR MALANICUS

And, as one of the baffled band,
I would rather have had that foray
Than the crushings of all the Rand.

In the event, of course, they had the foray and the crushings of the Rand as well.

If the great bulk of the Afrikaans-speaking community have gradually drifted into the ranks of extreme Nationalism—and perhaps two-thirds of Afrikaners vote for Dr. Malan's party—the English have in part only themselves to thank for it. They looked down their noses; and the Afrikaners, perhaps a little ashamed of their rusticity even while vaunting it, did not like this. And there was all the less reason for this assumption of superiority in that the English had thrown up few or no sign of outstanding ability since Cecil Rhodes. English culture in South Africa has remained second-hand and second-rate: Afrikaans culture may not often be distinguished, but at least it is first-hand, indigenous, genuinely South African. The English stage in South Africa has little to offer: the Afrikaans stage, by contrast, has a good deal. Though much debased by the political habits of mind of the Afrikaner public, Afrikaans literature is a livelier growth than indigenous English literature.

Being much in the condition of those who have reaped where they have not sown, and are living fatly on the proceeds, the English-speaking community bestirred itself too late and too little. Instead of finding means to reach the Afrikaner community in the name of a common society, they had little to offer but the old contempt and prejudice. When Malan made *apartheid* his electoral cry, the United Party—the party of the 'English'—could do no more than follow in his wake. Instead of appealing to that great fund of idealism which the war had released—to the sentiment of the soldiers who had come back cured at least in part of racial madness—the United Party niggled along on the old familiar lines. They found contact neither with the Afrikaners nor with the non-whites, although the opportunity to do both was there, uniquely there; and they were beaten.

Strangely enough, then, at the very time when relations between whites and non-whites approach exploding point, the whites remain almost exclusively occupied in a private feud of their own. The issue is

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

not much concerned with the fate of the non-whites, for both white communities are substantially agreed that any future other than permanent white supremacy would be unbearable. The issue is a struggle for power within a framework of the permanent white supremacy that both take for granted. Even as late as 1952, when it was clear that the Nationalists would scarcely be made to relinquish their hold by normal parliamentary means, the United Party had still no thought of turning to the non-whites for alliance.

This internecine feud among the whites confuses but does not alter the general picture. Men of goodwill speak and write of the need for friendship between 'the two races' in the Union; but the visitor should not be misled. They do not mean the white race and the black race: they mean the 'English' and the Afrikaners. That this competition for power between the two white groups is largely irrelevant to the future of South Africa, since the decisive issue of African development is not really touched by it, is a point of view that will meet with little sympathy from either. Both white groups have their eyes fixed eagerly upon the prize of political power: neither seems within a hundred miles of knowing that what happens to the whites in South Africa is far less important and less interesting, at this moment, than what happens to the non-whites. The world might well be moved to dismay if the 'new order' of Dr. du Plessis's 'gentle curvature' were to become a sharp reality in South Africa; and at least a million English-speaking South Africans (not to speak of a million and a half Afrikaners) would suffer by it. Yet this misfortune for South Africa must seem relatively small beside the present misfortune, when nearly nine million non-whites already live under such an 'order'. And have so lived, a little better or a little worse, through many years of English-speaking, non-Nationalist government.

Were the contractual relations of master and servant, for example, ever seriously modified or reformed by non-Nationalist Governments? And was that Chief Magistrate a Nationalist, who, prosecuting 152 'night-soil boys' in 1918 because they had gone on strike from their noisome work, gave them two months' imprisonment and told them that: 'While they were in gaol they would have to do the same work as

they had been doing, and would carry out that employment with an armed escort, including a guard of Zulus armed with assegais and white men with guns. If they attempted to escape they would be shot down. If they refused to obey orders they would receive lashes as often as might be necessary to make them understand they had to do what they were told.'⁸¹

It may seem unreasonable to keep dragging up the past: yet against the long slow crucifixion of the Africans in South Africa the battle of words and shaken fists between the 'English' and the Afrikaners of today can seem, to strangers, little better than a shoddy farce.

SECRET SOCIETY

IT is a farce, however, with an underlying note of tragedy. What the Nationalists do to the non-Nationalists may matter little in the long run compared with what both have done, and do, to the Africans, the Coloureds, and the Indians: even so, what they do to the non-Nationalists, the 'English' and the 'loyal Dutch', is still a bitter worsening of the human agony. And 'they' in this context is not the bulk of the Afrikaner people nor yet the poobahs of the Nationalist Party as such: it is the Great Assembly, or Grootraad, of the Afrikaner Broederbond. Like all peoples of primarily pastoral and nomadic tradition, the Boers of old were attached to leaders rather than opinions; and it is the same with the Nationalists today. Dictating to others, they are willing—within limits—to be dictated to themselves. The Broederbond is their contemporary instrument of dictatorship.

The Broederbond is said to have been founded as a secret society on the morrow of De la Rey's brave but futile revolt of 1914, the last armed sortie of the Boers against those who had taken their country a dozen years before; and its principal object was always, and is still today, the creation of a South African Republic in which the Afrikaans-speaking group would hold permanent sway. Today, nearly forty years later, the Broederbond is perhaps the most important political institution in South Africa, though the secrecy with which it is surrounded makes measurement difficult. In the Parliament which elected Dr. Malan as Prime Minister it is said on reasonably sound evidence that more than four-fifths of all the members of the Nationalist and Afrikaner Parties were Broers, or brothers of the Bond. All the important Nationalist Ministers were and are Broers. The Bond operates as a kind of *Mafia*, persecuting, penetrating, infiltrating.

The late General Hertzog clashed with it after Malan's secession from

SECRET SOCIETY

the old Nationalist Party in the early thirties. 'Owing to the nature of the Afrikaner Broederbond,' he said on November 7, 1935, 'it is impossible to ascertain what is going on behind the scenes, and there is accordingly no protection for the non-Broer against the secret supporters of the Broer. There is nothing to prevent the Bond from being misused as an instrument for organized action in conflict with the best interests of the State and the Public Service.' And he went on to explain that Dr. Malan himself had become a member of the Bond at the time of his break with the old National Party.

Smuts too was driven to sharp words about the Bond. Speaking at the Bloemfontein Conference of the United Party in December 1944, he said that he wished 'to express my opinion of this secret society because I fear that it holds very serious consequences for the nation, and is going to be the cause of new discord among the people. . . . It is clear that the Broederbond is a dangerous, cunning, political, Fascist organization of which no civil servant, if he is to retain his loyalty to the State and Administration, can be allowed to be a member.'

Like all secret societies of this kind, the Broederbond has never been able to restrain itself from the publication of manifestoes. There is therefore no difficulty in assessing its aims with some accuracy. But in making this assessment it should be remembered that the Broederbond today claims, and almost certainly receives, the steadfast loyalty of all the principal men of the Nationalist Party. The Broederbond is not simply an excrescence on the ugly growth of racial oppression, like the Ku Klux Klan in the Southern States of America: it is much more than that, it is in a real sense the Government of South Africa. Its 'twelve apostles', meeting in the Uitvoerende Raad, the executive committee of the Grootraad, are reliably said to exercise a continuous and decisive influence on Nationalist policy.

The Broederbond has generally provided for two methods of attaining power. It has had its regular method of working within the parliamentary ambit; and it has had its instruments for 'direct action'. The 'Purified National Party' of Dr. Malan—the breakaway from Hertzog's leadership—is said to have been accepted by the Broederbond in 1935 as being 'the best instrument whereby the Republic can be brought

about'. But in 1938, perhaps dissatisfied at the slow approach of the Republic and encouraged also by events in Germany, the Broederbond developed a strong-arm branch in the shape of the Ossewa Brandwag—the 'Ox-Wagon Sentinel'—at the moment, appropriately enough, of the centennial celebrations of the Great Trek. General Hertzog had already defined the general aims of the Bond as being to strive 'by means of domination on the part of the Afrikaans-speaking section to set their foot on the neck of English-speaking South Africa': adding, as a gloss perhaps upon his own extremist past, that 'the Broederbond has shed its youthful innocence and has suddenly become a grave menace to the rest and peace of our social community. . . .'

The Ossewa Brandwag soon gave point to these words. As the Hitlerian frenzy mounted among the Nationalists, its leaders prepared for a *coup d'état*. In doing that, however, they opened one more of the many fissures which have always divided the Nationalist leaders from one another. Just as during the old days of the Trek the 'commandant's party' was regularly at odds with the 'Volksraad party', and the Transvaalers with the Natalians, so now the strong-arm boys sent thrills of suspicion through the older and more respectable leaders. Hitler's Zeesen Radio might say that Dr. van Rensburg, leader of the Ossewa Brandwag, was South Africa's future Fuhrer: Dr. Malan and his friends understandably saw it otherwise. There was, accordingly, jealousy within the ranks: but as the months drew on and Hitler's final victory still eluded him, there came also a doubt to gall their hopes. Was it any longer possible to make a *coup d'état*? The more sober leaders soon decided that it was not, and found comfort in the fact. They introduced the 'gentle curvature' so nicely described by Dr. du Plessis; and the Ossewa Brandwag was given the cold shoulder.

As the years passed, and all hopes of Hitler's final victory vanished from the scene, the earlier enthusiasms of the 'OB' became more and more embarrassing to the Nationalists. In 1945 this embarrassment reached a climax. The Broederbond was understood to have become aware—presumably through agents in the public service—that the Government of Smuts had acquired possession of correspondence and reports seized from official German archives in Berlin and elsewhere;

and these documents, it was said, provided evidence that the leaders of the 'OB' had been plotting against the Union of South Africa to aid Germany. Whether such documents were actually found or not—or whether the Government used the probability of their being found as a weapon to frighten its opponents—is not known with any certainty: the fact remains that the Nationalists went through all manner of contortions to deny their Nazi sympathies. Indeed, they are still very touchy on the point. Witness Dr. du Plessis.

This touchiness was observed especially during the negotiations which led up to the fusion of the Nationalist and Afrikaner Parties in 1951. The Ossewa Brandwag, still alive though little active, complained that the negotiations had gone on over their heads; and that discrimination against 'OB' members was being shown. It may easily be so: after all, having secured power by parliamentary means, the Broederbond has no present need for strong-arm squads.

The Broederbond cannot be said to be a Fascist organization in the stricter sense of the word. It was not cultivated, reinforced, and finally brought to power by the private financial and industrial agencies which operated decisively both for Mussolini and for Hitler. It was never the last-ditch defence of a capitalist society threatened by social revolution. On the contrary, the bigger financial interests in South Africa have usually been opposed to the Broederbond, and are probably so today. If the white supremacy that ensures cheap labour were really in danger, no doubt it might be otherwise: as it is, the Gold Producers' Committee seems of the opinion that the Nationalists themselves are at present a danger to white supremacy simply because they provoke such hatred of the whites among the non-whites.

That distinction made, it must be added that the Broederbond (and therefore the Nationalist Party) gives in all it does and says an excellent imitation of Fascism. Its last publicly admitted circular was issued as long ago as 1934, when its chairman of the day, Professor J. C. van Rooy, and its secretary, Mr. Ivan Makepeace Lombard, concluded with these elevating but not empty words: 'Brothers! Our solution of South Africa's ailments is not whether one Party or another shall obtain the whip hand, but that the Afrikaner Broederbond shall govern South

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

Africa.' In 1944 *Die Transvaler*, breaking a long silence, issued five 'communiqués' on behalf of the Bond. These declared, *inter alia*, that the Bond acknowledged the judgment of only 'the highest court—the volk itself'; and went on, with words which possibly possess a deep significance for Nationalists, to record its conviction that 'the Afrikaner nation is planted in the country by the hand of God, and is destined to exist as a nation in its own right and with its own mission'.

These articles in *Die Transvaler* defined a seven-point programme for the Broederbond and the Nationalist Party. These points were:

- (1) the independence of South Africa;
- (2) the abolition of inferiority of Afrikaners and their language;
- (3) strict segregation of all non-whites;
- (4) an end to exploitation of South Africa and its peoples by 'aliens';
- (5) rehabilitation of the farming class and social security through work and more intensive industrialization;
- (6) nationalization of credit and a planned economy;
- (7) the 'Afrikanerization' of public life and education 'in the Christian National sense', leaving the internal development of all sections of the populations free—so long as it did not militate against the State.

Six of the points of this programme, it is worth noting, were embodied more or less as they stand in the 'social and economic programme' later sponsored by the Nationalist Party; the seventh point is being actively promoted by infiltration into the present organs of public service and education.

But while it is true that the Broederbond commands, and can command, no great apparatus of financial and industrial power, it would be wrong to think that it rests merely upon the whims of ultra-Calvinist professors and ambitious politicians. It rests, besides that, upon the interest and prejudice of a wealthy farming community; upon the unified obscurantism of the Dutch Reformed Churches; and, increasingly, upon the financial and commercial interests which the Broederbond itself has been able to assemble in the last twenty years or so. Not possessing large reserves of private capital, the Broederbond has always

used periods of Nationalist Government to promote State-owned investment; the most imposing instance of this was the foundation of the South African Iron and Steel Corporation. In doing so, of course, it has helped to supplant the colonial pattern of the South African economy by that of 'home-made' capitalism; and, to that extent, has hastened the development of the country and the eventual liberation of its inhabitants. But it would still be true to say that if the leaders of the Broederbond intend the State to own industry, they also intend the Broederbond to own the State.

The Nationalists have lately sought, and wisely from their point of view, to take a share in the expansion of commerce and light industry. At the same time as they established the Ossewa Brandwag, the leaders of the Broederbond also went into business in a determined way. Of commercial organizations then founded, the Reddingsdaadbond is probably the most important: according to a statement by Dr. Diederichs, the Hooftleier of the Reddingsdaadbond, to *Die Transvaler* on July 1st, 1947, this organization 'controlled fourteen Union-wide companies, including banking concerns, with a combined capital of £7 millions, and these in turn control between £20 millions and £30 millions. The turnover amounted to between £400 and £500 millions. The Reddingsdaadbond was also entering industry and press and publishing houses, insurance, and the hotel business.' It is further said that the Dutch Reformed Churches have been persuaded to place their presumably considerable savings in the financial institutions of the Broederbond.

Small wonder, in these circumstances, that the Broederbond, as General Hertzog said, should have 'shed its youthful innocence'. No longer is it a question of riding out as De la Rey did to sacrifice one's life and property, if need be, for the sake of Boer freedom: nowadays there is money in the game. And even big money. From the desperate gallantry of men who burnt with anger at the injustice of the British invasion, the spirit of the Broederbond has reduced itself to the cravings for filthy lucre of a big financial corporation. Ah, what a falling off was there, my countrymen. . . . For what would old De la Rey, or Christian De Wet, have to say of Dr. Diederichs and his turnover?

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

The spirit of the old Boers was the spirit of the volunteer. It was not compulsion which kept together the little company that Louis Trichardt led out upon the Great Trek northward, and it was not compulsion which kept the Boer army in the field against great odds. The commandos could fight so long as the men consented: otherwise they had a way of melting overnight. But the spirit of Dr. Diederichs and the Broederbond is the spirit of dictation, a travesty of the attitude to one another of the Boer settlers.

The Broederbond controls thus the greater part of the Afrikaans-speaking Press; and non-Nationalist writers in Afrikaans, no matter how talented, find it difficult or impossible to get their work published. Trade unions manned almost exclusively by Afrikaner workers are systematically undermined by the Nationalist Government; and their members trapped if possible into joining the Blanke Werkers Beskermingsbond (White Workers' Protection League), which operates on the pattern of Mussolini's 'syndicates'. The Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings, meanwhile, unites all 'social and cultural' activities within the Afrikaans-speaking community; and strives, as one of its principal objectives, to secure a monopoly for what it calls 'Christian-National education'. It strives, that is, to teach children the extremities of Genevan Calvinism, complemented by gross racial prejudice, at a time when these children are growing up into an industrialized South Africa. Not simply compulsion therefore: but obscurantist compulsion. In a country where most white people have their eyes three-quarters closed to the realities of the modern world, the Nationalists are busy bullying the children into closing their eyes altogether. There could not be, one would think, a more reliable recipe for trouble.

Such being the content of Nationalist thought, can their form of government for long remain parliamentary democracy?

If the Broederbond were physically and financially stronger, and rested upon the ownership of large and profitable investment in industry, perhaps not. But the Broederbond, for all its ranting and raving, is weaker than it seems. Bred to a complex of Afrikaner inferiority—which the 'English', be it repeated, have generally enjoyed provoking

—the Broederbond knows its own weakness. Beyond a certain limit it dare not carry the anti-‘English’ campaign—for beyond that limit there would arise a danger that the ‘English’, if only in the extremity of self-defence, might turn to the non-whites for alliance. It may not matter that Nationalist persecution should drive the non-white communities into an alliance they would never have admitted even a few years ago, for the non-whites are relatively helpless to defend themselves. But the ‘English’ are far from helpless. They are a million strong; they have vital ties with the outside world, with Britain but also with the United States; and they are therefore to be tolerated. That is why the Nationalists are so polite to visitors, why their behaviour under criticism differs so much from that of the Nazis, for example, or even the poor Italian Fascists. That is why Dr. du Plessis, while explaining to me that ‘we want a flag of our own, a national anthem, and a President instead of a Governor-General’, hastened to add—this being 1951 and not 1941—that ‘South Africa should not isolate herself, but remain in association with the Commonwealth’. The leaders of the Broederbond cannot afford to be first-class Fascists.

Nineteen-fifty-one brought many signs of Nationalist hesitation. The Nationalists, evidently, were as yet unsure of themselves, and preferred to make their position in Parliament cast-iron before risking the provocation of violence. To that end they have acted with foresight and deliberation, which is more than can be said of the United Party in its day. The electoral procedure provided after the Act of Union already gave the countryside—and therefore the Nationalists—a proportionately ‘weighted vote’ over against the towns, the average rural constituency being always smaller than the urban constituency. Not to have altered this in good time was one of Smuts’s more obvious errors of omission. This was the reason why the Nationalists were able to secure a majority of seats in 1948 although they failed to secure a majority of votes. But the majority of seats was still uncomfortably small. Dr. Malan lost no time in assuring himself a bigger one next time.

In 1948 the Government abolished the very restricted Indian franchise, which the Indians, resenting this segregation, had in any case refused to operate. It amended the citizenship act so as to prevent

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

British immigrants from retaining dual nationality, and to require residence of five years (instead of six months) before an immigrant could vote. It provided itself with the sure support of six new Members from ultra-nationalist South-West Africa: whereas the average number of votes in an electoral division of the Union was 9,013 in 1949, the average in South-West Africa was reduced to less than 3,500. In 1951 it removed the Coloured voters from the common roll, and thereby curtailed their power of opposing the Nationalists at the polls; and people freely said that before long it would abolish the three Native Representatives provided for in 1936. Meeting in Bloemfontein in September, the Free State provincial congress of the Nationalist Party unanimously resolved to ask that native representation in Parliament be abolished, and official steps to that end were expected. Last but not least, the Government by 1951 had added to the statute book a measure for the 'suppression of communism'—the effect of which was meant to be not only the elimination of a small but effective Communist influence on public affairs, but, much more than that, the removal from public life of all those individuals who possessed a genuinely liberal influence.

By that year, not surprisingly, the prospects of United Party success at the polls in 1953 looked extremely poor. With racial propaganda going full blast, the Nationalists would scarcely lose much in the rural areas: this being so, it would be necessary for the United Party to win back a large number of urban seats, and nobody could see where these were coming from. Only the world economic crisis of the early 'thirties, after all, had put the Nationalists out before: and in 1951 rearmament and the 'cold war' looked as if they were going to take care of that contingency.

Knowing their weakness but knowing also their strength, some of the Nationalist leaders were already beginning to show signs of dissatisfaction with this cautious advance towards 'independence'. There developed, as yet incipiently, the same fissiparous tendency which in its day had split Hertzog from Botha, and Malan from Hertzog. No longer was it a case of hotheads such as Pirow and van Rensburg, whom Hitler's collapse had made more or less permanently impossible: they were dissatisfied, and growled from the long grass of Nationalist inter-

nal politics about 'clique dictatorship' in the Nationalist Party, but they could be ignored. What was more unsettling to Dr. Malan, and could not be ignored, was the possibility that some of the real contestants for leadership might be wishful of pushing the pace. Among these contestants, perhaps the most influential at this time was Mr. Advocate Strydom, from the Orange Free State, who already felt himself strong enough for an open clash with Dr. Malan over the latter's supposed 'moderation'.

Towards the end of 1951, accordingly, Dr. Malan let it be known that 'the issue of the Republic' would be raised as an electoral cry in 1953. Like *apartheid* in 1948, 'the issue of the Republic' would offer a solution to none of the problems of South Africa. It was an irrelevance, but a usefully confusing irrelevance charged highly with emotion. Whether Dr. Malan meant to carry it through to the establishment of a Republic was neither here or there, for by 1951 he was an old man full of years, and could care for little that was new. Already, behind Malan, there rose the shadows of new men who were neither full of years nor satisfied with what they had done. Could they be blamed for being a little over-eager in their desire for the succession?

These Nationalist leaders were in any case caught in the dynamics of political ambition. As one more measure to improve their electoral position—and in line with the dogmas of *apartheid*—they had carried through Parliament in 1951 their Act to put the Coloured voters on a separate electoral roll. Now this Act deprived these voters of an electoral status they had enjoyed since 1853: this status, in turn, had been specifically protected by the Act of Union, virtually the South African constitution, which says that Parliament may not alter or repeal any of the provisions of that Act 'unless the Bill embodying such repeal or alteration shall be passed by both Houses of Parliament, sitting together, and at the third reading be agreed to by not less than two-thirds of the total number of members of both Houses'. But the Nationalists could not command a two-thirds majority in either House of Parliament: if the Act of Union was still in force, accordingly, they could not pass the Coloured Voters Bill without infringing this 'entrenched clause' of the Act of Union. The Nationalists proceeded to argue themselves out of

this by saying that the Act of Union was no longer in force, being superseded by the provisions of the Statute of Westminster and the Status of the Union Act of 1934: any South African Government could now pass by simple majority any law, whether or not that law offended against the 'entrenched clauses' agreed upon by all parties in 1909-10.

The United Party, in opposition, would have none of this. They were understandably opposed to destroying the South African constitution in this anti-democratic manner. They knew too, apart from the question of principle involved, that destruction of one 'entrenched clause' could only be the prelude to destruction of others. And another of these clauses was one which protected the equality of status of English and Afrikaans. Abolition of these 'entrenched clauses' would mark a long stride on the road towards one-party dictatorship by the Nationalists; and would place the English-speaking community (and all who sided with them) in permanent political inferiority. Knowing this, the United Party took their case against the Coloured Voters Act to the highest legal authority in the land; and the Appeal Court, early in 1952, handed down an unanimous judgment which said that the Coloured Voters Act was unconstitutional, and therefore invalid.

This constitutional crisis had tremendous impact. It has still further widened the cleavage between Nationalists and non-Nationalists. With an obstinacy in the best Boer tradition, Dr. Malan forthwith announced that he would introduce legislation which should supersede the Appeal Court—which should leave South Africa, that is, without a written constitution. Ignoring history, the Nationalists held that the Act of Union had been imposed on the Afrikaners by the British: new legislation should therefore end this 'state of constitutional enslavement', and enable the Union Parliament to have 'complete control over its own acts'—phrases which meant, in reality, that the Nationalist Party should have 'complete control' over the Union Parliament. In April Dr. Malan introduced a Bill to establish a 'High Court of Parliament'—a court, presumably, higher than the Appeal Court.

Faced with this, the United Party wavered: in the middle of this crisis, amazingly enough, it accepted a parliamentary truce—allowing Parliament to adjourn—for the period of the van Riebeeck tercentenary

celebrations. Some of its influential supporters thought that they had better try for compromise with the Nationalists before it was too late, hoping in this way to rebuild the old Smuts-Hertzog coalition in a new form, and to prevent the succession in the Nationalist leadership from passing later to 'wild men' like Mr. Advocate Strydom. Behind the scenes, United Party delegates were reported to have made cautious approaches to Dr. Malan. There were signs, meanwhile, of a foreign investors' boycott of capital-starved South Africa, and of growing economic strains. Early in the 'thirties economic crisis had forced Hertzog into coalition with Smuts. Could it be that some of Smuts's successors—themselves very influential in deciding the economic condition of South Africa—were hoping for a repetition? Others were opposed to compromise, and believed that the Nationalists would never be strong enough to secure the one-party dictatorship they evidently meant to secure if they could. None of the United Party leaders, apparently, drew the conclusion that they ought to seek alliance with the nine million non-whites of South Africa: or that this was the only way of proving, in the end, that the United Party really stood for democracy against dictatorship.

But the United Party had yet another string to its bow.

CHALLENGE TO NON-NATIONALISTS

I WAS sitting in one of the bigger hotels of Bloemfontein one day when the scouts of the 'Torch Commando' drove in. The bar bestirred itself, the little crowd around it expanding and contracting like a man who takes a deep breath, and people sat forward in their chairs. Was this at last the answer to the Nats? The scouts were bronzed and brawny young men, and not-so-young men, in spotless polo breeches and riding boots: the women with them were as the women on the posters of the steamship companies, their wide blue eyes full of the glare of the open spaces, their bearing that of the wives of the masters of men. If anyone could 'deal with the Nats', surely these could? The scouts sat down to tea and toast.

Their business in Bloemfontein that day was to raise recruits for the projected motor drive of the Commando from Johannesburg to Cape Town. This motor drive, like the Commando itself, was the sequel to a big demonstration by United Party supporters in Johannesburg against the Bill to remove from the common roll the Coloured voters of the Cape. For months afterwards the doings of the Commando would draw the interest of the whole of white South Africa; the newspapers would be covered with articles for and against it, praising, denouncing. The United Party would take fresh heart and courage: the Nats would redden with anger and irritation. In May the Commando would drive down to Cape Town and there, under the leadership of a distinguished South African airman, Group-Captain Malan, would march in demonstration against the Nats. Composed mostly of ex-servicemen, the Commando would commit itself to a nation-wide recruiting drive in August, and plan to reach a climax of agitation against the Nats on October 23rd, the day which commemorates the battle of El Alamein. By the middle of 1952, indeed, the Commando would number 150,000 members.

CHALLENGE TO NON-NATIONALISTS

The coming of the Torch Commando, and a little later of the War Veterans Action Committee, stirred new hopes among non-Nationalists that something effective might at last be done to stem the tide of events. Their morale notably improved. Hitherto they had felt themselves trapped in the policy-less stagnation of the United Party, which was now, after Smuts's going, little more than a lumbering coalition of contradictory interests and opinions whose new leader, Mr. Strauss, showed no ability to lead from the front and little enough to lead from the top. What liberal-minded non-Nationalists of both languages thought about the Commando was well if somewhat hopefully expressed by *The Friend*, of Bloemfontein, when it wrote in July that 'the task of these men would be to keep the torch of liberty, which had shone so brightly when the Commando came into being at the time of the passage of the Separate Representations of Voters' Bill, burning steadily in the minds of men throughout the length and breadth of the land'.

And indeed it was time that the United Party should bestir itself. The Nats were having things all their own way. In a speech typical of Nationalist sentiment at this time, Dr. Karl Bremer, the Minister of Health, told an audience at Uitenhage that 'I can assure them (the United Party) that we are laying our plans and will have everything ready to ensure that the Government stay in power for years and years'. Not that the United Party needed any telling.

What was worse, the Nats were putting teeth into their anti-English policy. In these months they applied to the Transvaal a Language Ordinance which was tantamount to imposing the Afrikaans tongue on many parents who might wish their children to be taught in English or in both languages. The Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg, the Right Rev. R. A. Reeves, stigmatized this Ordinance as 'the type of law that weakens family life'. Well he might, for another effect of the Ordinance—directed in this aspect especially against the Roman Catholic Church—would be to deprive many children of religious teaching except according to the fundamentalist canons of the Dutch Reformed Church. The Ordinance, declared the Venerable R. P. Y. Rouse, Anglican Archdeacon of Johannesburg, was an infringement of religious liberty, 'and

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

the blows struck against the Roman Catholic Church were, in the long resort, blows against the religious freedom of all sections of the community'. The Transvaal and South Africa would one day regret the Language Ordinance, added the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Pretoria, the Right Rev. L. C. Garner, for 'no nation ever has or can do violence to the natural law without eventually having to make amends'.

It was not surprising, therefore, that the main plank in the programme of the War Veterans Torch Commando should be 'racial unity'—but unity, that is, between the Afrikaans- and English-speaking 'races'. Thus the chairman of the Johannesburg committee, Mr. L. Kane-Berman, told the first conference of the Movement, held in June 1951, that: 'We think the breach between Afrikaans and English-speaking people today is so serious that the country is on the verge of ruin'. Their primary object, therefore, was to campaign for the maintenance of equal rights between the two white 'races'; and in this respect their standpoint was precisely that of General Hertzog when the 'Purified Nationalists' broke away from the old Nationalist Party early in the 'thirties.

So far, so good. Equal rights for the two white 'races'. But could the War Veterans stop at that? Were they simply to ignore three-quarters of the population?

And here, of course, the war veterans of the United Party were impaled nicely on the horns of dilemma. To ignore three-quarters of the population would be to make a nonsense of their claim to stand for democracy against the emergent dictatorship of the Nats. But to talk of 'racial equality' as between the whites and the non-whites was tricky work. Most of them, let it be admitted, could envisage no such development without a shock of horror. To talk in that way would be to verge perilously on the despised position of Liberals and Communists: the United Party as a whole would never stand for it. And what would the Gold Producers' Committee say if black miners were to be encouraged to think that they ought to have equal rights with white miners? Where would the cheap mining labour come from then? Mr. Strauss, Smuts's successor as leader of the party, had already met the same nasty problem when introducing to Parliament the United Party's 'Bill of

CHALLENGE TO NON-NATIONALISTS

Rights'. Rights for whom, and for how many? That was the question: and nobody knew how best to answer it.

Mr. Kane-Berman, to do him credit, had a brave go at it during the first War Veterans' conference in Johannesburg. 'The quarrel with the Government,' he declared, 'was that its actions had led to a deterioration of race relations, and that it was playing into the hands of the Communists.' 'Sailor' Malan followed with a stout declaration that the Movement's aim should be 'to restore a sane and democratic government, trusted by South Africa and the outside world'. At a time, he went on, 'when it was necessary to form a united front against Communism, the Government had united the natives for the first time in the history of the country and was throwing the Coloureds into their camp as well'. No truck with 'Communism', then: and 'Communism', apparently, was anything that 'united the natives'. 'The Government,' explained 'Sailor' Malan, 'was an active ally of Communism' in that it was doing just that.

Interesting, no doubt, but not really helpful. Nobody had yet clearly answered the question whether the War Veterans meant to try to carry the United Party towards a more liberal conception of racial opportunities. The constitution of the Movement, issued at the close of the conference (but not, apparently, much discussed by it), declared that one of the principles of the Movement was 'to promote racial harmony', and left it at that. But the conference also laid down that the Movement must make 'no discrimination' on grounds of colour, and committed the Movement, at any rate 'in principle', to accepting non-whites into membership. This, sadly commented *The Star* of Johannesburg, 'will promote much reflection on the avoidable complications which have arisen through the acceptance of such a hard and fast principle'.

It did. The Nats, who were watching for just this, were on to it like a knife. In laying down the principle of 'no colour bar on membership', did the War Veterans intend that this should become the rule for the United Party? Where, they asked, was this sort of 'communistic agitation' going to stop? Already the Nationalist Press had accused the War Veterans Movement of harbouring dangerous Liberals and Com-

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

munists from the Springbok Legion. And already the War Veterans, drawing their skirts aside in horror, had disclaimed any connexion with such notorious elements. From the beginning, in short, the Nationalists had the War Veterans on the run over the very issue—white-black relations—that counted most.

As the months passed by it became clear that the War Veterans would prove incapable of resolving their dilemma. More and more clearly, they drew away from the 'principle' of no colour discrimination: more and more, they were manoeuvred by the Nationalists into defending themselves against charges of sympathizing with the 'Liberal-Communist' desire for the progressive extension of political and civil rights to the non-white communities. In withdrawing thus, they revealed once again the inner weakness of the United Party's case. For the United Party, after all, wanted nothing more than to restore the *status quo ante* Malan: to carry on in the old familiar way, with the whites on top and the blacks down below, but tempering this, as the United Party had always tempered it, with a certain spirit of tolerance and mercy. If many had hoped that 'Sailor' Malan, a gallant airman, would break away from this tradition and demand something new, they were disappointed. Private evidence suggested that the War Veterans had received the support of mining magnates only on the tacit understanding that this should not happen. The names might be new: but the mixture was the mixture as before. By the end of 1951 the whole movement had retreated so fast and so far from any notion of 'equality of opportunity regardless of race' that it was now well in the rear of liberal trends within the United Party itself. Such was this movement's moral plight, indeed, that it even excluded Coloured ex-servicemen from its demonstrations on El Alamein Day—although its formation had arisen from a protest against the *separate* electoral representation of Coloured people!

It was a sad fate for a movement which had seemed to promise much; but it was not perhaps surprising. To deny the past of the United Party was to deny Cecil Rhodes, to deny the whole concept of South Africa as a 'white man's country', to deny every one of the principles of government upon which most of these ex-servicemen were formed.

CHALLENGE TO NON-NATIONALISTS

Even the late J. H. Hofmeyr, a man of broad liberal vision, had failed to resolve this dilemma. And within the framework of present white society in South Africa it is indeed insoluble. What was most to be regretted was that the chance of leading these ex-servicemen, and many liberal-minded individuals within the United Party, out of their land of mental bondage, seemed once again to have been lost. Had Hofmeyr followed the advice of his friends ten years ago, and broken away from the United Party to form a Liberal Party or something like it, perhaps things might have gone differently for the Torch Commando. Such a party would have had no chance of governing South Africa today; yet it would have gathered to itself an increasing number of people for whom the reality of racial oppression at last becomes intolerable, but who are not yet equipped to understand the full implications of what the ending of that oppression must entail. Political liberalism might then have had an influence. As it is, liberal-minded individuals within the United Party are imprisoned by those who govern it—are imprisoned, in the last resort, by the need of the Gold Producers' Committee for cheap labour and the determination of that Committee, come rain come fine, to get it.

If the Broederbond today were content with its gains, and preferred to use these to strike an advantageous compromise with the United Party, no doubt it would find a ready enough response from the other side. If economic crisis were once more to undermine the prosperity of Afrikaner farming, no doubt the Smuts-Hertzog 'fusion' of 1933 could be repeated; although such compromise could be made only at the bitter expense of the non-white communities. But with continued farming prosperity, even today at a most satisfactory level, and with powerful interests in the United States already bidding against Great Britain for South African co-operation, there was no reason as yet why the Broederbond should abandon its declared objectives. Perhaps some of the older men in the Party might be ready for compromise; perhaps even Malan himself might not now be entirely averse from coalition with the United Party on advantageous terms. But these 'moderates' knew that they would at once suffer the same political death as Hertzog

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

suffered if they once allowed their rivals—the real rivals like Strydom and not the wild men like Pirow—a handle to unseat them.

They have pushed on, accordingly. And pushing on, they drive the United Party into positions which consort uneasily with the traditions of that Party. In June 1951, for instance, we have Mr. H. G. Lawrence, one of the United Party's leading men in Parliament, in sharp opposition to the Suppression of Communism Act. The terms of Mr. Lawrence's amendment on this occasion are worth recording, for they show that the United Party may still be driven into a less ambiguous defence of civil rights. 'This House', the amendment said, 'declines to pass the third reading of the Bill because it seems to combat Communism by the methods of the Fascist Police State, more particularly in that:

- (a) its provisions constitute a threat to the freedom and liberties of the people;
- (b) it interferes with the fundamental rights of the individual to vindicate his character in the Courts of the Land;
- (c) It is calculated to lead to grave bureaucratic abuses and to unjust interference with the private lives of innocent citizens.'

Such arguments, the Nats could say, were little more than shadow-boxing, since the amendment had no chance of being carried: they showed, none the less, that Mr. Lawrence and his friends were being led to talk an unaccustomed language. And talking can sometimes lead to acting. Even so, the constitutional crisis of 1952 still found the United Party without a policy for effective political action.

As the Nats tightened their grip, the political atmosphere grew more tense. To a stranger it seemed as if the whole of white society were seized in some tremendous process of disaster which none knew any longer how to stop. Wilder and wilder accusations were flung back and forth—dictatorship, 'storm troops', national suicide, the destruction of family life, the undermining of civilization itself. By the spring of 1952, after the Appeal Court had declared invalid the Separate Representation of Coloured Voters Act, there was talk even of civil war between the two white communities. To the Africans, bent beneath their familiar load, this frantic feud between their masters must have seemed strange, and perhaps even rather comic. It seemed strange, though not comic, to many of the whites themselves.

CHALLENGE TO NON-NATIONALISTS

An attitude of condescension would be impertinent and silly. To visitors from other lands where the problems of a multi-racial society are only academic, this frenzy of dispute about what is really an irrelevance—the question, that is, of *which* white supremacy—must seem perversely beside the point. But it does not seem so to those involved: to them it seems the stuff of life itself. For them, behind their rigid barriers of prejudice, there is in the present condition of South Africa a sense of doom and despair which is both real and immediate. Many of the signs of this point to a sort of collective panic in which fear seems to play the dominant part. To the quarrel between the Nationalists and the non-Nationalists there is added the mounting fear of what may now lay in store for the whites as a whole. In Johannesburg, as I have already noted, this fear reaches a point that is almost tangible. You can feel it, trembling and thrilling, in the very atmosphere of that incongruous city. It is as if these people were treading upon the crust of a volcano and knew no longer how to reach firm ground. They stumble forward along their appointed road; but their road, they cry as they go, can only engulf them in the end. . . .

'It is not my own servants I'm afraid of,' said a distinguished South African journalist, 'but my neighbour's. . . . My own will murder my friends next door when the time comes.' Melodramatic, perhaps: but the melodrama was only half intended. 'It's a fine country,' said another leading journalist, and added with a laugh, 'as long as it lasts. . . .' These two were English-speaking South Africans, politically most orthodox; but Afrikaans-speaking journalists I found in little better shape. 'You will never be able to explain our feelings in rational terms,' said the editor of a Nationalist daily paper, flying from argument, 'for at bottom they are prejudice, pure prejudice.'

One can condemn the helplessness of these people; but one can also feel sorry for them, and even sympathize with them in their plight. For the forces in play are out of hand: the sorcerer's apprentice is beginning to lose his nerve. *Herr, die Not ist gross! Die ich rief, die Geister, werd ich nun nicht los. . . .**

*Lord, come quickly back! Those I conjured up, the spirits, will simply not submit . . . (With apologies to Goethe).

ANOTHER KIND OF AFRIKANER

YET the political limitations of white development, narrow as they are, tell only part of the story; and, in the long run, the lesser part. Political and emotional pressures notwithstanding, the industrialization of South Africa has another side of the story to relate. It is with this other side of the story that the racial deadlock begins to break down, and a real hope for the future to break through. The social effects of industrialism—and hence of urbanization—are proving as profound for the whites as for the non-whites. The needs of industry have begun to force prejudice aside. Integration, even if blind and undirected, gradually has the better of segregation.

This other side of the story presents itself in different ways. You can catch a glimpse of it in some of the new factories in Johannesburg, where Coloured and African men and women now work alongside white men and women in spite of all the massed regulations and prejudices which are intended to prevent it. You can find new kinds of hope for South Africa in as dull and ordinary places as the minutes of some of the trade unions. You can hear, if you have time to listen, new things being said on the subject among groups of workers at factory gates. Such hints that South Africa may yet evolve a peaceful and prosperous society in which racial issues can be amicably settled are not easy to find: when found, they are often elusive and contradictory. Yet they are there, and they are new.

The essential background was described by the Native Laws Commission of 1948. 'Between 1921 and 1946 the European percentage (of population) in the rural areas decreased from 44·22 per cent to 27·54 per cent, or by about two-fifths. . . .' In that quarter of a century, this movement of whites into the towns, and the growth of industry which it both fed and stimulated, killed the noxious problem of 'poor

white-ism'. It did for the whites what the further growth of industry is now beginning to do for the non-whites. It provided an exit from an otherwise inevitable poverty and distress. It began the work of laying foundations for a genuinely unified society—a society, that is, where communal differences, though they would certainly persist, would no longer be made the excuse or instrument for racial oppression.

This double process of integration and segregation has produced in South Africans of every community, but especially among the whites, an ambivalence of mind, an incipient schizophrenia, which makes clear description unusually difficult. Those whites who have genuinely faced the implications of industrialism, and have fully conquered their racial prejudices, are still few and far between. More often one meets among them men and women whose minds appear sincerely divided between two opposed attitudes: they see the need for racial integration in many of the practical affairs of daily life—such, for example, as trade union unity for the purposes of bargaining—but at the same time they are still attracted to the tradition of prejudice, and cannot yet tear themselves free of it. Formed by a society that is wedded to racial oppression, their emotional reactions run into conflict with their practical experience and understanding. Their lives become one long contradiction.

Nor is it easy for a stranger to understand to what depths these South African prejudices reach. At a distance they may seem absurd, irrelevant, out-of-date: all too clearly, when seen from near at hand, they are not to be dismissed as easily as that. They will respond, as the evidence already shows, to the right clinical treatment; but the right treatment demands that the reasons for prejudice be understood and that other people, when necessary, should admit their own errors. If most Afrikaners still remember the South African War with bitterness it is partly because the British (and many of their all-too-patriotic 'sons' in South Africa) have still to admit that the South African War ought never to have been waged. Nor, by the same token, is it realistic to expect most Afrikaners (or most South African English) to slough off their complex of inevitable superiority over against the non-whites—until the institutions of repression are weakened, and a more enlightened social framework begins to take their place. Until, that is, the transition from a

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

primitive, 'extractive' economy to an industrialized economy has had time to teach them better.

This process of teaching and learning can be seen at work in South Africa today. There is nothing in the whole country that is more stimulating. And there is probably no South African who could describe it, and all it means, more directly and dramatically than Johanna Cornelius, a fine and handsome Afrikaner, built in every way to a big scale, even an heroic scale, who will usually be found in the office of the Garment Workers' Union on Commissioner Street in Johannesburg.

Johanna Cornelius, I imagine, is in the direct line of those Trekker wives who went out into the blue with their menfolk a hundred years ago, built homes beyond the Orange and the Vaal, loaded flintlocks when the Matabele and the Zulu came down on their little *laagers* with a forest of angry spears, and survived to mother the Afrikaner nation. In other circumstances, when she is full of years, she would make a fine model for Gorki's *Mother*. She has true peasant strength and straightness of eye.

She overcame her modesty, and told me her own story, because it seemed to her that it was typical for Afrikaners whom poverty had driven from the *platteland* into the towns in search of work, and would therefore help to explain what these people thought and felt. And one prime value of this story, perhaps, lies in the fact that Johanna Cornelius comes of a long line of Boer farmers in the Western Transvaal. 'My whole family was Nationalist, and so was I. Both my grandfather and my father fought in the Boer War and were exiled for it to Ceylon: and in the rising of 1914—when I was only two years old—my father joined De la Rey, for which they put him into prison again.' Few people in South Africa—or perhaps anywhere else—have wrought such changes in their outlook as Johanna Cornelius, between the time when she first went to Johannesburg and the day when she began to champion the trade union rights of non-white workers.

In its general attitude, she said, there was little to distinguish her family from thousands of other Afrikaner families in the *platteland*. 'Father was very strict, read the Bible to us every day, said prayers

before every meal, despised the English, and thought the natives were born to be our slaves.' When they talked about the world, she said, they talked really about South Africa, for it seemed to them that the world and South Africa were just about the same thing. For the world outside South Africa they cared not a brass farthing.

When Johanna was eighteen, poverty at home drove her into Johannesburg. She was one of many. The towns were already full of the impoverished sons and daughters of the backveld. Unhappily for Johanna and her like, the world slump arrived in Johannesburg at about the same time. Work was hard to find. Wages were no better than the wages that many despised 'kaffirs' could earn. Many of the Afrikaners became 'poor white trash'. Earnest churchmen discovered that crime and prostitution were rife among them. Government racked its brains to devise 'solutions', and found none that was effective. Commissions sat, deliberated, took evidence, recommended: the flood from the *platteland* came in undiminished, and poor white trash kicked its heels on every street corner.

But it shines through Johanna's story, which says little about these hard and bitter years, that Johanna was too strong for adverse circumstance. She found a job in a clothing factory at one pound a week. 'I worked on patent machines and boarded with an aunt in Vrededorp.' She had been brought up to the free and easy life of the backveld: now she worked for a pittance in a sweat-shop and knew what hunger was. Many gave in, and let demoralization carry them where it would: the 'degeneration' of the poor white trash became a national scandal. But not Johanna: within a few months she had discovered that a young man called Solly Sachs was beginning to organize the girls of the clothing industry—unheard-of thing—into a trade union to fight for better conditions. Johanna liked the idea of fighting for better conditions, although she had, at this time, no notion of how such fighting might be possible.

But this man Sachs had an excellent notion. 'At the end of 1931 a deadlock occurred in the clothing industry,' Johanna said, 'and a strike took place in which I took part. I was an ordinary member of the garment workers' union then, and for three weeks we had meetings every

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

day in the Trades Hall and danced the whole day through, until Mr. Sachs, who was then the General Secretary of the Union (as he still is) and Mr. G. Malan who was President, informed us that the employers had decided to drop their demand for a cut in wages.' These plain words cover much that was far from plain. Johanna and her fellow-workers, at this time, were working from half-past seven in the morning until a little before six at night, and Saturday mornings as well. In the clothing factory where Johanna was, 'the foremen were very abusive, and generally there reigned a feeling of fear and slavery'. At this time, too, Johanna was walking three miles to work and back.

Yet the strike of 1931 was only a foretaste of the fighting. A year later all employers began to cut wages in face of the depression. Unemployment grew worse. At the end of that year the clothing employers moved to cut wages in Johannesburg to the level of the coastal towns: this meant that fully experienced girls would be cut from £2 10s. a week to £1 10s. Sachs led his union into a strike against the cuts, and it was not long before this strike had spread to all the clothing factories of the Rand. Hand in glove with the Nationalist Government, the employers called up police reinforcements to push scabs through the picket-lines. Johanna was among those who resisted the scabs. 'Fights started outside factories between the strikers and the police.'

Pirow, then Minister of Justice and later an ardent follower of Hitler, 'sent mounted police to ride over us, and with their help the bosses managed to get wages reduced by five shillings for the experienced workers, and from one pound to eighteen shillings for beginners.' Pirow promulgated an order which banned Solly Sachs from the Witwatersrand. Johanna, with thirteen other girls, were arrested and placed in Germiston prison.

But Pirow, the police, and the employers together were not enough to intimidate the garment workers. Johanna came out of prison and was elected a shop steward of the union, now painfully rebuilding itself: Solly Sachs was still on the Witwatersrand.

The Government and the employers shouted blood and murder during these struggles. The newspapers discovered 'plots from Moscow'. It was 'all the work of the Communists'. And a good deal of

ANOTHER KIND OF AFRIKANER

interest attaches therefore to Johanna's state of mind at this time. She already saw, as she says, that there was a way of fighting for a better life, and that the unity of the garment workers and their trade union had pointed where this lay. Beyond that, it is clear that Johanna's political ideas were elementary in the extreme. 'It took me years,' she said, 'to get used to the notion that even the English—let alone the natives—were human beings. And it wasn't until I went to England, in 1935, and mixed with English people, that I was able to sit down and write a letter to my family to tell them that we should have to change our ideas about the English.'

In 1933 Johanna's education was attacked from another and unexpected angle. 'To my surprise, I was elected to join the workers' delegation which our union decided to send to the U.S.S.R. to take part in the celebration of the October Revolution that year.' How much 'communism' Solly Sachs had taught Johanna and her fellows can perhaps be gauged from her story. 'I hadn't the slightest idea who Lenin was. And I remember on the boat that people began to talk about us as Bolshies: and Katie Parker and I were worried about this, and asked why they did. Then P. Farmer, the other delegate, told us about the Bolshevik Revolution and about Lenin.'

'Even then, I still regarded the natives as being pretty well sub-human. I remember they asked me in Russia if I was a native of the Union of South Africa; and I replied indignant: "No, I'm a white woman, can't you see?"' Visiting the Soviet Union, it seems, did not make Johanna a communist, but it seated more firmly than ever in her mind the conviction that the struggle of her union was the most important thing in life. On the way back she went to London, and saw the English as they were at home, and sat down and wrote to her mother: 'Mother, we have got to change our ideas. . . .'

She tells about this period, too, a story that speaks volumes for the state of angry resignation that reigned in the backveld, and gave backbone to the Nationalist Party. When she came back from Russia and visited the family farm near Lic'enberg, her father and neighbours were eager with their questions. Her father, the staunch old warrior who had been 'out' in 1899 and again in 1914, and twice suffered for it,

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

called meetings so that Johanna could tell what she had seen. She might belong to some strange trade union or other and indulge in dangerous thoughts about the English, she was still their daughter and the daughter of the *platteland*, and would tell them the truth. They thirsted to know the truth. 'I had to talk for hours, mostly at little open-air meetings arranged at father's farm, where the farmers drove in to listen.'

'One day, after I'd told my relatives about the way in which there was a government of the working people in the Soviet Union, and where there wasn't any foreign exploitation, my father sat back and said: "Well, it looks as if they did the right thing after their revolution, where we did the wrong thing after our war of liberation." . . .' There spoke in that—leaving aside all controversy on Johanna's views about the Soviet Union—the authentic sense of frustration and pent-up anger which the Boers felt, and their descendants still feel, against the *Uitlanders*, the foreigners, who somehow managed to take their 'liberties' away from them—a sense of anger which gives the Nationalist leaders their real hold on the countryside of white South Africa, and which the English in this land have never really tried to assuage.

Upon this sense of anger and grievance the Nationalist leaders have built a whole edifice of violent nonsense. Yet facts remain facts. In 1938, when Johanna was taking an active part in anti-Fascist propaganda, she went frequently to speak to farmers in the countryside. 'It was pretty tough. The farmers would listen all right, but the Nats were also busy. And one place we'd arranged a meeting, I remember, without knowing that the Nats had also arranged a meeting. The farmers came in their black shirts and with whips. They said they'd beat up the Communistic scum. They tried to shout us down. But we spoke to them for all that. And one farmer, you know, took his whip and broke it across his knee, and said that he and his family were poor, and now he knew whose side he was on. . . .'

A similar story, but relating to the year 1950, was told me by Piet Huyser, another Afrikaner who has overcome his racial prejudice in the course of becoming a trade union leader. Piet had gone down to organize the building workers on the new goldfields of the Orange Free State. Most of these building workers were lads straight from the

ANOTHER KIND OF AFRIKANER

platteland, and many of them came from the constituency which elects Mr. Advocate Strydom, one of the most extreme of the Nationalist leaders. Yet they were poorly paid and worse housed, and they knew it. Piet explained to them that they could better their conditions only by banding together, and that the best way to band together was to join a trade union. Other people at other times, he explained, had thus banded together. He told them about trade unions. He proposed that they ask for May Day to be a paid holiday. What was May Day? they asked. He told them what May Day meant in the annals of working people in South Africa and in other lands. He recalled the great strike of 1922, and of how Taffy Long and three others had gone to the scaffold, singing the *Red Flag*. The audience listened intently to these amazing things: they had never heard anything like it before. Though Nationalists to a man, they applauded Piet when he had finished.

On the way home that night, Piet gave a lift to one of the workers on the site. 'I vote Nationalist, you know,' said this worker, 'but I listened to what you said. I never knew before that people like me had done things like that. It's a fine thing to know. I'm glad I know it.' He caught Piet's arm and said earnestly: 'But look, it's funny, isn't it—Advocate Strydom never told us these things. . . .' Here, once again, was the same spirit and stumbling for the truth, hindered, hobbled, hard to guide, which caused many people of the backveld to send food and other help to the strikers on the Rand in the violent year of 1922, and which has often made the Nationalist Party the 'party of the workers'. It is the spirit of resistance to imperialism which Advocate Strydom and men of his kidney have been perverting and misinforming these thirty years and more.

In 1934, when she was twenty-two years old, Johanna became president of the Garment Workers' Union. The struggle, as she says, was still 'very bitter', but the foundations were laid, and already the union had successfully attacked some of the worst conditions that the clothing workers had to face. But only in 1938 did they manage to restore their wages to the level that had existed before the depression, and to reduce their working hours from forty-eight to forty-six a week. 'Then, in 1938, we met for the first time a new enemy of the workers. At a con-

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

ference of the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuur, a certain Mr. Kock made a cowardly attack on the garment workers. At that time, Johanna said, 'it was fashionable in more comfortable Afrikaner circles to discuss the factory girls and their so-called high wages as a menace to the Afrikaner volk. The more fortunate—*bevooregte*—Afrikaners thought that it was the duty of the poor Afrikaner women to work in the kitchens of the *meer bevooregte* and to look after their children. . . .'

There had begun, with Kock's attack, the assault on trade unions which the Nationalists have since carried on by coercion and corruption. Johanna was to hear a great deal more from Mr. Kock and his friends, for between them it was a battle to the death—a battle between the future of the Afrikaner people and their past.

TRADE UNION NOTES

IT was not surprising that the Nationalist Party should see in the growth of the new trade unions of secondary industry a direct blow at their most cherished positions. For these new trade unions, incorporating working people of all the South African communities, were indeed a blow at the very heart of the Nationalist movement. More and more Afrikaner men and women were learning through the practical experience of daily life that their one hope of economic salvation was to band together not only with each other, but with Coloured and African workers as well. Small wonder that the Nationalists should redouble their efforts to undermine or smash these unions, should place leaders like Solly Sachs on their 'list' of people to be 'suppressed' by the so-called Suppression of Communism Act, should go to every possible length, legal or illegal, fair or foul, to hinder Nationalist-voting Afrikaners from continuing in their support of such unions.

For consider the further story of the Garment Workers' Union. In the 'thirties strong-minded daughters of the *plains*, such as Anna Scheepers, Johanna Cornelius, Katie Viljoen, and others, had fought to place the union on an unassailable foundation among white workers. With single-minded zeal they stormed the strongholds of Nationalism, outfaced angry employers, defied the police, chased off scabs, and gained the loyalty of a great majority of the workers in the industry. Within a few short years they had built a powerful organization.

But in 1939 nearly all these members of this particular union were white. The Coloured workers in the industry were relatively few, and were organized, if at all, in other unions. The war, greatly expanding South African industry, has revolutionized the situation. The entire strength of the Garment Workers' Union in the Transvaal by 1951 was 17,000 and in the Cape Province 13,000; together they formed the

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

largest grouping of industrial labour in South Africa. Non-white workers have flowed into this trade as into many others.

By 1951 the garment workers' union of the Transvaal had some 600 shop stewards who were working for the closer integration of the three communities. They were working, no doubt, with varying degrees of zeal, understanding, and success: but the trend was unmistakably towards integration and away from segregation. At a union conference early in 1951, 300 shop stewards representing about 8,000 white clothing workers voted unanimously against the policies of *apartheid*: most of these shop stewards were Afrikaners—more curiously still, many of them would vote Nationalist rather than United Party or Labour or Communist. (By 1951, of course, they were in any case unable to vote Communist.)

The degree of racial integration that they would admit varied according to place and temperament. In the Cape Province, the garment workers of all three communities were organized in a single union, and held unified meetings, voting and meeting together. In the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, the union was still divided into three sections, for white, Coloured, and African workers respectively: and meetings were not yet held without racial distinction. Nationalist politicians were working hard to persuade the garment workers to abolish the principle of the unified union: the battle for and against this raged back and forth, with both sides advancing and retreating as their fortunes wavered. The Industrial Legislation Commission reported in December 1951 that it had decided, 'after mature consideration of the evidence', to compel trade union segregation. And yet 'the evidence presented to the Commission'—in the Commission's own words—was 'overwhelmingly *against* the introduction of legislation compelling the segregation of the various races into separate unions. . . .' Seldom, even in South Africa, can there have been a clearer case where purblind racialism has got the better of common sense. In any case, the conventional colour bar against non-white workers doing skilled work—and receiving the wages for skilled work—was still in effect (though with many exceptions in Cape Town and Durban), and was passionately supported by a majority of the white workers. A wide assault on this

TRADE UNION NOTES

colour bar had still to be made. Meanwhile, the leaders of the garment workers defended as best they could their principle of a unified union.

Matters had come to a head, as far as the garment workers were concerned, during a delegate conference of the whole organization that was held in Johannesburg in November 1950; and the results of this conference are worth recording for the light they throw on the wider scene. The minutes of the meeting, for a copy of which I am indebted to the Garment Workers' Union, tell their own story.

The scene is the familiar one at trade union meetings: a large bare room with a long table at the top and many chairs facing it. The chairs are filled with thirty-four delegates of the Union, strong self-confident women who feel themselves very much the masters of their fate. Of these delegates, twenty-one are Afrikaans-speaking, two are English-speaking, and eleven are Coloured women. The atmosphere is tense, because two of the Afrikaans-speaking delegates, Mrs. Combrink and Mrs. Oelofse, have tabled a resolution which would have the effect of preventing non-whites from belonging to the Union. Mrs. Combrink, moving this resolution, complains that she does not like 'being classed with non-Europeans', and will not attend general meetings and sit next to them. Sitting down, she says in disgust: 'I, a white South African, being classed with *them*!'

Katie Viljoen rises in protest. Like Johanna Cornelius, Katie Viljoen is another daughter of the *platteland* who has grown with her trade union into a better understanding of life. According to the minutes, 'Katie Viljoen (Port Elizabeth, Cape Province), appealed to Mrs. Combrink to remain calm when speaking. She said that the position in Port Elizabeth ten years ago was that a majority of members were Europeans. Today eighty per cent were non-Europeans. . . . Wages ten years ago were less than in Cape Town or Durban, but today they are much higher than in these two centres, due to the loyal support of *all* sections of members. Workers of whatever colour should all stand together and united,' Mrs. Viljoen concluded: 'We must be united, otherwise the conditions of the European workers would be in danger.'

A coloured delegate, Mrs. I. Adams, also had something relevant to say. She would like to tell Mrs. Oelofsee (one of the two movers of the

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

resolution) that 'her attitude today as regards being in conference with Coloured people or even being in the street with Coloured people was one hundred years too late. If Mrs. Adams's grandfather or great-grandfather had adopted that attitude, when meeting Mrs. Adams's great-grandmother, she, Mrs. Adams, would never have happened'. The minutes fail to record, perhaps discreetly, just what it was that Mrs. Adams said on this point.

What matters to the story is that thirty-two out of thirty-four delegates opposed the resolution which Mrs. Combrink and Mrs. Oelofsee had proposed. As well as the English-speaking and Coloured delegates, that is, all except two of the twenty-one Afrikaans-speaking delegates voted against preventing non-white workers from joining the union, and sitting together in common. And this in the Transvaal, be it noted, at a time when the *furor malanicus* was at its height.

Much the same encouraging story can be told of other new industries and new trade unions. The lead which Sachs gave to the garment workers, the garment workers have given to others. Johanna Cornelius played a leading part in organizing the tobacco workers in 1937. After that she and others helped the sweet workers to organize. The leather workers, dental mechanics, nurses, hairdressers, and others have followed suit. 'Even unemployed farmers,' Johanna says, 'come to us for work because they have heard that we can place people in the towns.' Betty du Toit helped to organize the laundry workers, Pauline Podbrey the sweet workers; and the movement steadily grew. Today all these unions have mixed membership: the sweet workers have a mixed executive committee. By the end of 1949 there were fifty-six trade unions with mixed membership; and their membership numbered 118,168.

It would be highly misleading to say that these achievements had won the battle against racial prejudice among the working people of all communities. Far from it: even those whites who vote for mixed trade unions are often imbued with deep-set feelings of contempt and dislike for their non-white fellow-members. It could hardly be otherwise in a society where all the social pressures, and most of the economic pressures, are combined to increase racial prejudice. What the white workers

feel for the non-white workers, the Coloured workers too often feel for the Africans. Any simple description of this medley of caste and class prejudice would almost certainly go wrong. Yet by and large it is possible to say that a small group of enlightened white trade unionists—among whom Sachs has rightfully the place of honour—have succeeded in breaching the solid wall of prejudice that they stormed some ten or fifteen years ago. Through that breach, all pressures notwithstanding, a flow of white workers proceeds steadily into a climate of opinion where the issues of a multi-racial society are no longer acute, frightening, or insoluble.

The picture in the older craft unions is very different. Here all is confusion and dismay. Many of them are directly under Nationalist influence, associated in the Geko-Ordeneerde Raad van Vakverenigings, which includes fourteen unions with 26,976 workers, of whom the white mine-workers number about 17,000. (The latter seceded from the Raad in September 1951 during a personal dispute.) These unions subscribe to the full letter of Nationalist doctrine, maintain the most rigid colour bar, and can be said to have degenerated into mere political instruments of the Nationalist Party. What part they are intended to play can perhaps be gauged from their deliberate subsidizing of anti-unionist activities within the newer mixed unions. The Mineworkers' Union, for example, was found during legal proceedings in 1951 to have contributed several thousand pounds to a Nationalist-controlled publishing company called Die Werkerspers. This company published a periodical *Die Klerewerkersnuus*, designed to attract members of the Garment Workers' Union away from that union and into membership of a Nationalist-controlled union for garment workers: and another periodical, *Die Bouwerker*, which was supposed to perform the same service for building workers.

The venture, like others of its kind, was singularly unsuccessful, which once again says much for the foundation that Sachs and others have laid. It foundered, finally, when Sachs and Huyser took out writs for defamation of character, won their cases, but were unable to recover the full damages that the Supreme Court awarded them. 'Very few copies of *Die Klerewerkersnuus* and *Die Bouwerker*,' said the company's

affidavit pleading inability to pay, 'were ever sold, and the advertising was not sufficient to cover printing expenses. . . .' It was not known who all the company's creditors were, but among them were the 'Voortrekkerpers (Voortrekker Press), in respect of printing charges, about £2,500; Mineworkers' Union, for balance of loan, £2,000; and approximately £2,000 for legal expenses.'⁸² Sachs was accordingly granted an order of final liquidation—not the first time that he had taken his opponents to court on the subject of his character and opinions and vanquished them. South African mine workers, one would have thought, might have found a better use for their money.

The substance of this libel was the familiar charge of 'communistic sympathies'. In print and out of print, the same charge has been preferred with dreary regularity against all those trade union leaders, small in number but great in influence, who have broken through the organizational colour bar. Sachs himself, it is perhaps worth noting, had been expelled from the Communist Party in 1932, during a doctrinal dog-fight, together with a number of other leading Communists and the late Bill Andrews, by any standard the biggest political figure the trade union movement in South Africa has produced. Unlike Andrews, however, Sachs never rejoined the Communist Party; and nobody who guesses or knows the least thing about the nature of Communist discipline could surely think that he was subject to it. A boisterous individualist, Sachs has always preferred the lone hand—a fact which has not prevented the Nationalist Government from framing their Suppression of Communism Act with the silencing of Sachs as one of its main objectives. The truth seems to be that Sachs today is about as much a radical as H. J. van Eck: both these forceful men, in their several ways, see the best hope for the future in an intensive development of South African capitalism. At the time when he was 'listed' under this Act, Sachs was the honorary treasurer of the Labour Party, which he had joined in 1946.

What depths of futility—or cynicism—were now plumbed by the Nationalists came out in letters to the 'listed' persons exhorting them to write letters in their own defence. As Sachs said in his letter of reply, this 'inviting' might seem fair and just: 'in actual fact, it is sheer mock-

ery'. The Act was so framed as to remove from public life and influence anyone who stood effectively for human rights in South Africa; and Sachs had stood thus for twenty years and more. A Liquidator was appointed under the Act. In Sach's case the Liquidator objected to Sachs's habitual use in union correspondence of the terms 'comrade' and 'yours fraternally'—an objection, incidentally, which would make 'subversive' the whole British Labour Movement, including most of His late Majesty's recent Ministers.

The Nationalists have had easy work in pushing through this so-called Suppression of Communism Act—not so much because they could out-vote the opposition of the United Party as because they have succeeded in winning the support of the bulk of the white workers in industry. It is one of the more dismal aspects of the contemporary South African scene that while so vicious an attack on trade unionism could stir the United Party—the Party of the big employers—to opposition, it entirely failed to stir a breath of protest from unions as long-established as that of the mineworkers. This Nationalist achievement has of course reflected the failure of the bulk of white workers to achieve a clear understanding of their own position. And this failure, in turn, reaches back into the origins of industrial politics on the Rand. It touches, especially, on the failure of the South African Labour Party both to develop a consistent attitude to colour questions and to stick to first principles. Before 1922, the year that was to prove a turning point, the white unions in South Africa had had no stern and rigid doctrine on colour questions, although from early days they had maintained a conventional colour bar on skilled work. But they had maintained this colour bar as much as anything to protect their own standards of living from the threat of 'dilution' by cheap African labour: they were not usually bound by strong emotional convictions to the notion of inevitable white supremacy. These emotional convictions were to come later. And had the Labour Party's leaders in those early days taken as enlightened a stand on colour issues as Sachs, for example, takes today, things might have gone differently.

It is all too easy, in condemning white workers in South Africa for their acceptance of racialism according to Malan or even according to

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

Smuts, to forget the strains to which they themselves have been subjected. It was no easier or less painful for them to secure recognition for trade unions than for workers in other lands and at other times. In those rip-roaring days of easy money and easy trigger-fingers, employers fought the nascent unions with a violence which is not easily paralleled by examples elsewhere. In the bloodiest struggle of all, that of 1922 on the Rand, it is worth remembering that 'the Government (of Smuts) brought up 19,124 fully-armed effectives with military aviation, artillery, machine-guns, armoured trains and cars and a tank'.⁶³ The mine-workers had a few hundred rifles and fought back, inflicting some 400 casualties on the Government's forces, of which 72 were fatal, and having 40 killed themselves and some 150 wounded. There was nothing complacent or 'non-political' about that.

In spite of these struggles, the white workers regularly lost footing on what may be called the ideological front, allowing themselves to be pushed step by step into irreconcilable opposition to the non-white workers. One reason, perhaps, was the high mortality rate among their leaders, mainly from phthisis. Of the strike committee which organized the first big strike on the Rand, in 1907, only four out of seventeen were alive in 1913, when the bitter struggles of that memorable year at last forced both Government and employers to give full recognition to white trade unions. All but one of the union leaders who had died in the meantime had died from phthisis, and each of the four survivors were suffering from that disease: it was hard, in the circumstances, to maintain a strong leadership. But what defeated them much more than phthisis was the employers' threat, repeatedly made and often acted upon, to cut their wages by introducing cheap African labour. The mineworkers—and to a lesser extent the engineering and other skilled workers as well—allowed themselves to be pushed into the position of fighting on two fronts—to win higher wages and better conditions but at the same time to stem the potential influx from below.

And it was this that finally killed the Labour Party as a political force of any real significance in South Africa. Instead of going out actively to organize the non-white workers—as Sachs and others were to do later in the as yet non-existent secondary industries—the old-established

TRADE UNION NOTES

unions were content to place a ban on their entry into skilled occupations. This suited the employers, of course, for it meant that non-white workers would at any rate never be *paid for skilled work*—no matter if they often performed it. But it placed the white workers in a situation where they were bound to imbibe the same racist convictions as the Boer farmers had long imbibed. And since many of these workers were the sons of Boer farmers, the process of imbibing had usually taken place before they ever reached the Rand. From farm to mine, they moved in the same climate of prejudice.

This could end only in one way. In 1911 the Labour Party helped to carry the Mining and Works Act which had the effect of debarring workers from certain skilled occupations on the grounds of colour.⁶⁴ At the 1914 conference of the Labour Party its then leader, Cresswell, moved a resolution that 'it is undesirable to admit coloured persons to membership who have not given practical guarantees that they agree to the party's policy of upholding and advancing white standards. . . .' And, from here it was only a step to the extraordinary slogan which the strikers of 1922 inscribed on their banners—*Workers of the World, Unite for a White South Africa!* The non-white workers were to accept their fate of helotry.

After 1922, things went from bad to worse. In 1924 the Labour Party joined the Nationalist Party in the coalition government of General Hertzog; the Communist Party went into eclipse, partly through isolation and partly through sectarian extremism; and the trade unions were left without any effective political leadership except that of men who were deeply racist in their views. Things might have gone otherwise, once again, if Smuts after 1922 had permitted the African workers the right to join trade unions with full entry to collective bargaining: as it was, he supported legislation which prevented just this. There is here a useful comparison with Northern Rhodesia after the bloody riots of 1940 on the Copperbelt: in 1947 the Protectorate Government supported the formation of fully-fledged African trade unions, and these, by 1951, had achieved a not unpromising relationship with the white trade unions of that country, in spite of the persistence of a strong industrial colour bar. A way was opened for common action in Northern

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

Rhodesia—and therefore for mutual understanding and respect—which has remained closed in South Africa.

The white mineworkers of today have a sorry tale to tell. To such a point has their organization fallen that in 1951 the Government was moved to appoint a judicial commission to inquire into their union's financial transactions since 1948. 'Corruption on the part of Mr. D. E. Ellis, general secretary and executive committee member of the Mineworkers' Union, and dereliction of duty on the part of Mr. J. S. de Wet, welfare officer employed by the union, were two of the findings' of this commission.⁶⁵ 'The Commission came to the conclusion that Mr. Ellis was promised a reward by Dr. F. J. Kritzinger if he would use his influence to bring about the purchase of Trans-Africa House. The Commission suggested that Mr. Ellis obtained an interest in a bottle store as a reward.' Dr. Kritzinger had apparently offered to sell Trans Africa House to the Mineworkers' Union for £185,000. Happily ignoring these findings, in spite of their judicial nature, the executive committee of the Mineworkers' Union thereupon consulted 'senior counsel', and declared that it 'could find no grounds for taking any steps against any officer, or any member of its committee'. This procedure, as the *Rand Daily Mail*—no friend of trade unionism, but least of all of Nationalist-run trade unionism—pointed out, 'to say the least, was extraordinary'.⁶⁶ The men in the mines were not dissuaded from passing resolutions of no confidence in their officials, who continued to maintain, however, that the Commission's findings merited no attention.

But not all white trade unionists, as we have seen, were like Mr. Ellis and the executive committee of the mineworkers. With fresh evidence of the Nationalist Government's intention to smash all unions which were not safely under Nationalist influence, there came a certain closing of the ranks by the uncorrupted and unfettered unions. 'Don't be afraid to criticize our Ministers,' exhorted Mr. J. J. Venter, national president of the South African Trades and Labour Council—an equivalent of the British T.U.C.—remarking in conference in 1951 that 'the unions have become afraid with the change of government to express their opinions'. Miss Anna Scheepers, president of the Garment Workers' Union,

TRADE UNION NOTES

spoke at the same conference. She said that the trade unions had lost their spirit, and that if they did not recapture it they would not be able to withstand the bad legislation which might soon come. 'Every session brings a bit of Fascism,' she said; for if the unions had lost their spirit she had certainly not lost hers: 'At the next session of Parliament, Mr. Schoeman [the Nationalist Minister of Labour] may just as well be Dr. Ley [Hitler's Minister of Labour]. And you remember how the German workers were shackled.'⁶⁷

In 1951 it was not yet clear whether the white workers of South Africa, demoralized by years of racial politics, did in fact remember how the German workers had been shackled. Nor was it clear how far they would fight to protect their honest leaders and their own interests. But the signs were not all unfavourable; and the makings of a fight for the defence of trade union rights seemed already visible.

SOME INSTRUCTIVE CONTRADICTIONS

THE conclusion, appropriately enough to South Africa, is contradictory. There is plenty of evidence that the trade union movement has drifted with the bulk of the white population, and is still drifting, towards an ever more rigid and repressive racialism in step with the Nationalist Party and its Government.

Content with high wages (though not at all high on Dominion as distinct from European levels) and living standards that are buttressed firmly against 'African dilution', many white workers have turned their back on politics of any kind but the dumb maintenance of things as they are. Caught in their emotional dead-end, they apparently fail to notice that their own conditions could stand a great deal of bettering. Although their T.B. rate, for example, is many times smaller than that of non-whites in South Africa, it is still disgracefully high. On the face of it, true enough, the South African white T.B. rate is one of the lowest in the world. But the face of it is misleading: as the South African National Tuberculosis Association has pointed out, the majority of whites in South Africa belong to high-income groups, while T.B. is essentially a sickness which attacks low-income groups that are badly fed and badly housed. To compare the South African white T.B. rate with that of any other [country] 'is therefore quite misleading', since 'that would mean comparing the highest income group in the Union with the total population of another country. For example, the European death rate at East London [Cape Province] was 60 per 100,000 per year, while London, England, had a rate of 64 per 100,000 per year. The situation appears reasonably good. But when the [South African] European group is compared to an equivalent income group elsewhere, a different picture emerges. The rate among those with incomes of £350 per year and upwards in London is somewhere about 3 per

SOME INSTRUCTIVE CONTRADICTIONS

100,000.' The South African white T.B. rate, S.A.N.T.A. concluded, is 'dangerously high'—as indeed one might expect, given the chances of infection for whites which are afforded by a steep rate of incidence among non-whites.

That is one side of the picture—a trade union movement which is more or less content with things as they are. But the reverse of the picture contradicts this. Workers in the new industries, now rapidly expanding, have come increasingly to Katie Viljoen's conclusion—that 'workers of whatever colour should all stand together and united, otherwise the conditions of the white workers would be in danger'. Yet while continued industrialization must obviously strengthen the second of these trends, and thus strengthen the arm of those who follow Solly Sachs, Anna Scheepers, Johanna Cornelius, Piet Huyzer, and others, it would be rash to think that the prejudice of most Afrikaner workers will yield easily to the pressures of economic development. On this point it is perhaps worth quoting the frank and unrehearsed opinion of Johanna Cornelius herself. 'The Afrikaners,' she said, 'will be helped to get over their prejudices by coming into the big cities. First they can get over their hatred and contempt for the English and the Jews. Then gradually they'll learn to conquer their anti-native prejudices. But it'll need for that a revolution in mental habits. I know how long it took me, and what bitter personal struggles I had to take myself through, before I conquered my own prejudices. It took me a long time to speak to natives freely and easily, and to accept them as they are.'

But is there enough time for this before the storm breaks? Years of patient work may be required before a wide gate can be opened in the ramparts of white prejudice. And years, that is, even if the Nationalists (and, in their own way, the United Party) were not busily at work closing the gate that does exist. As things are, the gate seems to be closed by the Nationalists almost as quickly as it is opened by the new trade unions. And the Nationalists are likely to grow more—not less, efficient at this game of closing the gate. By operating their Suppression of Communism Act to remove from public life and trade union employment all individuals, non-Communist as well as Communist, who are working to open the gate, the Nationalists bid fair to make the prospect

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

quite hopeless. They are robbing South Africa, though neither they nor even the majority of the United Party seem in any condition to know it, of those few men and women who alone, perhaps, can point the way towards a genuine expansion in the wealth and well-being of the whole country.

In the long run, no doubt, industrialization will produce the conditions for racial equality without which South Africa cannot survive. But there is at this stage a peculiar pointedness in Keynes's well-known quip, that 'in the long run we shall all be dead'. Hatred and resentment pile hard and high upon the barriers of prejudice; and not only on one side. From a rapidly worsening situation, the Rev. Michael Scott has written, there is 'beginning to arise the spectre of the counterpart of white domination, a kind of politico-religious black racialism. . . . Even in [African] music, songs, and dances this influence is at work, fanning the fires of hatred and contempt for the white man's God, his justice and morality. It arises from the urgently felt need for deliverance from oppression. . . .' ⁶⁸ Scott was in a good position to know this, for he suffered at the hands of blind anti-white prejudice during his mission in Tobruk settlement, even though that mission brought him the respect of countless Africans.

If the South African Government were moved to relieve the pressure on the non-whites, perhaps there would still be enough time. But the pressure grows worse. What makes these racial barriers pile ever higher on the African side, meanwhile, is not only the treatment that Africans receive, but the belief that there is no prospect of improvement. In several British territories the treatment of Africans may be more humane, but their conditions are in certain respects—and especially in that of education—notably worse than in South Africa: the difference in social climate is caused by a belief on the part of the Africans that improvement is possible and even probable, or at least that deterioration is not certain. In South Africa, by contrast, the African knows that he is the complete prisoner of his white masters. He knows, furthermore, that his white masters cannot conceive of any state of affairs other than permanent and all-pervasive white supremacy.

'It is definitely nonsense,' declared the Council of the Dutch Reformed

SOME INSTRUCTIVE CONTRADICTIONS

Churches in a report adopted in 1951, 'to say that the non-European in our fatherland is being suppressed because he is forbidden the privilege of exercising his vote.' Arguing from a severely Calvinist position, the report maintained that 'the vote is a privilege entrusted only to those who have come of age, and who are capable of exercising it with responsibility to God. The native does not comply with these requirements, and he is, therefore, not capable of using this right properly.'⁶⁹ It would be fruitless to question the terms 'come of age' or 'responsibility to God', or to point out that many Africans confess Christianity (though not always according to Calvin): the Dutch Reformed Churches are wedded inseparably to white supremacy. God made South Africa for them: who are they to change it? Besides, just think of the cost. . . .

Yet it would be greatly under-rating the wisdom and maturity of the political leaders of the non-white communities to think that they are willing to surrender, or, on the other side, that they want a blood-bath. Most manifestly, they want nothing of the kind. In 1951 they began to prepare a campaign of passive resistance, of civil disobedience to racist laws, in which all the non-white communities were to participate a few months later. This campaign was initiated during the tercentenary celebrations of van Riebeeck's landing at the Cape; but it was not initiated in any spirit of racial hatred. On the contrary, those who framed it went to great lengths to instruct their followers to avoid any actions which might provoke a violent retaliation. The annual conference of the African National Congress, held in 1951 at Bloemfontein in the Orange Free State, had passed unanimously a declaration which for good sense and magnanimity deserves some study. 'All people,' they said, 'irrespective of the national groups they may belong to and irrespective of the colour of their skin, who have made South Africa their home and who believe in the principles of democracy and equality of man, are South Africans. All South Africans are entitled to live a full and free life on the basis of the fullest equality. . . .

'The struggle which the national organization of the non-European people are conducting', this declaration continued, 'is not directed against any race or national group. It is against the unjust laws which

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

keep in perpetual subjection and misery vast sections of the population. It is for the transformation of conditions which will restore human dignity, equality, and freedom to every South African.'

And it was in this spirit that the non-white communities, African and Coloured and Indian, braced themselves in 1952 for the struggle which they believed they could not avoid.

In this struggle there is no saying what will happen in the near future. The most one can usefully do is to point out where the roots of the struggle lie, and what forces are active in making or breaking it. Within these modest but necessary limits, it can only be repeated that the forces set in motion by a rapidly developing industrialism are those that will dominate the future. Even if a break should come, and chaos become general for a time, the pieces will have to be picked up again; and, once picked up, it will be into an industrial framework that they will have to be fitted. Meanwhile, there is some hope that a violent and chaotic break can still be avoided, and that the urbanization of large numbers of white and non-white workers will instead create a new pattern of common effort.

That such a pattern will come in the end, in spite of all racial prejudice, violence and confusion, and that the forces which will bring it are already at least visible and definable, need not be seriously questioned. Pessimists in South Africa can be heard to say that 'within thirty years we shall be a Black Republic'; that 'the white man will have to get out in the end'; that 'there is a clear choice between Black and White'. Such pessimism is frivolous or worse. There are nearly three million white people in South Africa, most of them born and bred in the country and looking to it as their home and their future. Most of them will stay in South Africa whatever happens. To suggest anything else is as unrealistic as Professor Cilliers's notion of deporting seven or eight million Bantu to Central Africa. Such pessimism ignores, as much as the Nationalists ignore, the simple fact that South African society is a single structure, for all its internal strains, and is so put together as to require all its members, white and non-white. Though locked in conflict, whites and non-whites are also locked in survival.

SOME INSTRUCTIVE CONTRADICTIONS

But there is yet another side to the matter.

If the Union of South Africa were isolated from the rest of the world, perhaps its affairs might matter little in the broad development of history. There are, after all, less than fourteen million people in South Africa: in the scales of history their destiny must surely count for little when compared with the millions of India, of China. . . . And yet the case is otherwise. Race relations depend in Africa, in the end, upon race relations in South Africa. If white men in South Africa fail to solve their problem of living peacefully with non-white men, there is little or no hope for a peaceful solution in other parts of Africa. That is why the condition of South Africa—numerically small though its population may be (and it numbers, for instance, much less than half the population of Nigeria)—must be necessarily of most immediate concern to everyone else in Africa, white or non-white. Gone are the days of 'red rubber', when the Belgians and the French of half a century ago could ruin whole populations in the dreadful silence and solitude of the Congo. The affairs of Africa today are known from one end of the continent to the other, and with most efficient speed. Already the racial oppression of South Africa has become a bye-word on the shores of the Red Sea, of the Mediterranean, of the middle Atlantic. Already the peoples of West Africa, reaching out towards self-government and independence, have begun to think that their enemies of tomorrow will be white South Africa and the allies of white South Africa. Already these feelings of hatred and suspicion have mounted so high as to cause white settlers in central and eastern Africa, from very fear for their own future, to denounce the actions of their fellows in the south.

In 1951 the British Government concluded far-reaching agreements with South Africa for strategic co-ordination and mutual military aid up and down the African continent. The price exacted by South Africa for these agreements was British appeasement of white prejudice. This price is fully paid. When, for example, a special Committee of the United Nations denounced South African racialism in January 1952, by 42 votes to 2, Britain was among thirteen nations which abstained from voting. Having paid this price of appeasement, the British found no difficulty in securing the military co-operation of the

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

South African Nationalists—who well knew, in any case, that they were too weak to dispense with the British connexion. For the purposes of the cold war and of the other kind of war that many Nationalists seem to believe will follow the cold war, they need the British connexion more than ever. Although they may refuse to give arms and military training to their own Africans, in 1952 they cannot refuse to co-operate with a Britain which has every intention, if it can, of giving arms and military training to Africans in British territories. Once more the Nationalists involve themselves in a sterile contradiction between theory and practice.

But the Africans already begin to see what is happening, and to draw their own conclusions. 'What do you Africans think about the war in Korea?' I asked a man in Alexandra Township. 'It is quite simple,' he replied courteously. 'Whenever you white men advance we are sorry. Whenever you run away we are glad.' For him, at any rate, the issue in play was the issue of white supremacy over the non-white peoples.

And perhaps not only for him. When whites in South Africa talk about the cold war, they are evidently not thinking of 'Communism', Russia, or any such distant and little understood concept. They are convinced, rightly or wrongly, that the 'defence of the West'—as far as Africa is concerned—means the defence of white supremacy against the racial equality of 'the East'. Many non-whites, it seems, are also convinced of this and would cast their vote for 'the East', even though they might be the firmest adherents of those 'principles of Christianity and commerce' by which their countries were drawn into the contemporary world. The 'Western way of life' may sound very fine and equal to those who enjoy its privileges: to those who do not, apparently, it strikes a rather different note.

It was clear in 1951 that the British Government, in opting for alliance with white South Africa on white South Africa's terms, had struck a shrewd blow against the interests of racial peace in other parts of Africa. Perhaps this was far from clear in Whitehall, or perhaps Whitehall had consciously accepted what it believed was the lesser evil: the results could scarcely be in doubt. Sweeping aside the venerable

SOME INSTRUCTIVE CONTRADICTIONS

jargon of trusteeship, Whitehall had as good as told everyone in Africa that the interests of white South Africa, of white supremacy, were to be the interests, ultimately, of the British Government. This was the real reason, after all, why Whitehall had banished Seretse Khama from the Bamangwato Reserve in Bechuanaland; and why Seretse is refused permission to return there, although his people want him. For this chief has committed the cardinal sin of marrying a white woman: and is anathema in the eyes of white South Africa.

But British policy is not to be judged, after all, simply by British attitudes to white South Africa. What happens in British territories during these years will react, and tellingly, on the Union itself. If white South Africa proves incapable of freeing itself from its self-inflicted torments, incapable of adjustment to new conditions and new needs, incapable of exploiting the new openings for common effort and prosperity which industrialism offers, what can be said of British territories further to the north? Are they treading the same fatal path in these years, or are they following another path, a path which white South Africa might also follow and thereby save itself?

The answer is of high importance—if only because the British, otherwise, cannot reasonably point a finger at the failings of white men in the Union. Most of the territories in this great region of white settlement are still under the rule of Whitehall—in the last analysis, the rule of the British electorate. Strong words in Britain against the condition of South Africa would be hard to justify unless British rule in Africa were more enlightened, were different, were heading for another destination.

It will be no good looking at West Africa, where the white man has no permanent and native settlement. For an outline to the answer, one must at any rate see something of the three High Commission Territories—Basutoland, Bechuanaland, and Swaziland—and of Southern and Northern Rhodesia. We shall get, if we see that, a great deal of conflicting evidence and a great many complexities and contradictions. Bechuanaland and Basutoland, for instance, are not areas of white settlement: yet their involvement in this matter is nevertheless direct and inevitable. We shall not get the full answer, since that would mean a

WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY?

judgment on the great areas of white settlement in East Africa as well. Even so, if we look at the wood as well as the trees in these British territories to the south of the Congo, we shall acquire a useful measure of the rights and wrongs for which the British Parliament, in these fateful years, is inescapably responsible.

PART FOUR

IN BRITISH TERRITORY

BASUTOLAND (1)

IF you drive eastward from the fine arterial road that runs from north to south through the Orange Free State, and links Johannesburg with Cape Town across a thousand miles of tarred surfacing, you raise a range of little crested hills upon the long blue skyline of the high veld. The road now is dust or mud, according to the weather, and jolts badly. After Thaba Nchu, a lost little town once famous with the Trekkers, you come among these hills only to perceive beyond them another and higher range, and at last, beyond that again, the shadow of steep mountains in a violet haze. These mountains divide the high grasslands of the interior from the sub-tropical lands of Natal.

After a while you enter a steep valley running from north to south and cross, at the bottom of it, a grubby little stream: the history books will tell you that this is the valley of the Caledon River, once terrible with the stamp and swirl of Chaka's *impis*; the grubby little stream is the Caledon itself. Behind you, on the right bank of the southward-flowing Caledon, the horizons of the high veld in their dun abandonment disappear beyond shouldered hills. Immediately in front of you, across the river, there stands a strong stone gateway and a road winding into the mountains. An African policeman in smart khaki uniform, puttees, shining boots, and wideawake bonnet lifts his hand, and you must stop. His shoulder badges proclaim the Basutoland Mounted Police: and the history books, once again, will tell you that this is one of the oldest colonial regiments in the annals of British imperialism. For this is Basutoland, one of Her Majesty's three Territories in southern Africa; and there, at the top of the first hill, lies its capital, Maseru.

After the flat bewildering plains of the veld the entry to Basutoland suggests drama; and the drama is physical. Beyond Maseru you will find that the road peters out within thirty miles or so: from the neck of

the pass above its ending at Mahaleng you can see the first of the five great lateral ranges which storm in cloud-racked peaks across this broken land from north to south: these ranges you can cross only with pack-horse and pony (unless by aeroplane, twice a week, to Ladysmith beyond the eastern ramparts of the Drakensberg). Basutoland has something of Tibet in its remoteness and difficulty of access. People do not ride on llamas: what is scarcely less astonishing among the Africans of southern Africa, they do not walk either—man, woman, and child, they ride on sturdy cross-bred ponies which lend them a dignity and prestige not to be found anywhere else in these parts. Though bearing much the same physical relationship to South Africa as Tibet and Nepal seem to bear to India—the contrast of highlands to lowlands, of land ‘untouched’ to land that is used and sorry—Basutoland is not in the least forbidden territory. The sensible if rather Kiplingesque characters who administer this tangle of mountains in the Queen’s name will be delighted to help you, once they are sure that you have come ‘for to admire an’ for to see’, and not to poke about and criticize: and may even be persuaded to lend you pack-horse and pony. There is probably no part of the Queen’s dominions where better conditions survive for a wild and wonderful holiday. White South Africans, notwithstanding this, almost never come to Basutoland: perhaps this is because Basutoland is a country where the ‘kaffirs’ are at home, possess a sense of sovereignty and strength, and do not respect the white man (and woman) in the manner of the serf with his master.

The Queen’s handful of administrators, no doubt, can be forgiven for feeling that there is something especially enchanting about Basutoland. For any white visitor it has the sense of beckoning concealment that Kipling put into his poem about the explorer:

It’s the end of cultivation: there’s no sense in going further. . . .

For the most part, white men have not gone further: and Basutoland remains a land that is uniquely inviolate in southern Africa, a land that is coveted by the whites of South Africa but whose people, amazingly enough, will know how to defend themselves, how to call upon the help of the outside world, and perhaps even how to get that help.

Most of their blessings the Basuto acknowledge to their great chief

BASUTOLAND (I)

Moshesh, dead now these eighty years. It was Moshesh who assembled the tribal fragments that the blood-lusted Zulu shattered, first at a rallying point near Butha-Buthe farther to the north, and later on the mountain fortress of Thaba Bosiu—the mountain that ‘grows taller by night’—a flat-topped crag wide enough to graze large herds, that neither Zulu *impis* nor Boer commandos could seize, though they tried hard. Upon this mountain there rallied to Moshesh the leaders of tribal fragments which were to form the Basuto nation: there came to him the earliest French Protestant missionaries and after them the Wesleyans, Voortrekker traders, British agents, lone-hands, explorers; and Moshesh received them all in peace and sent them on their way. For Moshesh was not only wise in war: since the time of the Great Trek, understanding as other African chiefs had failed to understand that the invading whites could also quarrel among themselves, he had asked for the protection of the White Queen. Only in 1867 did he obtain it. By that time Moshesh had seen the Boers encroach upon and seize his people’s rich lands to the west of the Caledon: and it was perhaps only in the nick of time that British protection saved for him the lowlands that the Basuto still retain.⁷⁰

What quality resided in this early African statesman may be seen from the terms of the Proclamation by which the Governor of the Cape, Sir Philip Wodehouse, admitted the Basuto to imperial protection. Moshesh would not buy protection at the price of alienation of part of his land to Europeans: he wanted his land unviolated for his own people, and in this—unlike Sobhuza in Swaziland—he had his way both then and later. The agreement was made as one more of many attempts by the British authorities to seal off the sources of trouble between settlers and natives: the Basuto were admitted to allegiance ‘with a view to the restoration of peace and the future maintenance of tranquillity and good government on the North Eastern Border of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope’.

They were admitted not as ‘protected persons’, but as British subjects: ‘I do hereby proclaim and declare,’ said Sir Philip Wodehouse, ‘that from and after the publication (of this Proclamation), the said Tribe of the Basuto shall be, and shall be taken to be, for all intents and

purposes, British Subjects: and the Territory of the said Tribe shall be, and shall be taken to be British Territory. . . .'

Interesting distinction, especially now when the Union Government reasserts its claim to possession of this people and territory: and the subsequent story is worth noting. In 1871 the Imperial Government permitted the Cape Colony to annex Basutoland—once again to free Whitehall of responsibilities for which it had neither time nor money. Ten years later there followed the Gun War, when the Cape Colony attempted to subdue the Basuto and were beaten off (as Sir George Cathcart and his regiments had been beaten off thirty years earlier) in what a military writer, referring to Cathcart's defeat, has called 'a fair fight with no favour'.⁷¹ Unable to subdue the Basuto, the Cape Colony hastened to hand back its responsibility for the territory to the imperial government, and the *status quo* of British colony was re-established in 1884. Since then the Basuto people have at all times been able to claim full rights as British subjects, though they have seldom or never done so.

Basutoland remained inviolate against the Boers, but not against the consequences of what the Boers were doing in the high veld to the west. As the Barolong and other tribes were deprived of their land, and squatters were deprived of their bare right to squat, Africans began moving into Basutoland from the Orange Free State. With these there came great flocks of goats. Between the two of them the rich 'red-grass' of Basutoland was steadily worn down, and the containing soil eroded until by the nineteen-thirties the outlook for this country seemed one of hopeless poverty. At this point the British Administration, traditionally content to regard Basutoland as nothing more than a convenient reservoir of cheap labour for the goldfields of the Rand, threw up four men of action. A little money was reluctantly made available. With the help of this little money Verney eliminated sheep-scab by gigantic personal efforts which included the building of 350 sheep dips: Thornton, beginning in 1935, began to demonstrate methods of soil conservation through contour-ridges, rain buffers, and dams: Collett, first under Thornton and then under King, initiated and carried on this work until by 1951 he had reached the point where all but a half of the ploughed

BASUTOLAND (I)

land in the low country (but more in the mountains) was substantially protected from further erosion. By 1953 the labour was to be finished. This was salvation, once again, in the nick of time; and once again a qualified salvation, with the future still darkened by the demands of white men who wanted nothing from or for this country but land for themselves or cheap labour for their mines.

Even so, and with reservations for the uncertain future, it is probably true that King, Collett, and one or two like them have done more to save South Africa from the encroaching desert than any men of their time, because Basutoland, where they have worked so well, holds the headwaters of the Orange River: Basutoland is the great watershed without the saving of which South Africa itself can scarcely be saved. An American authority, Dr. Lowdermilk, has described this work of conservation as 'the finest I have seen in Africa south of the Sahara'.⁷²

A day spent with Collett, who is as modest as most men of his kind, which is very modest indeed, is enough to show some of the results. You will see how whole hillsides in this wide and silent land, where shadows and stripes of sunlight chase each other across range after range, have been stripped to the bare rock. You will see red-ribbed gullies, many yards deep, where only fifteen or twenty years ago the grass was smooth and whole. Collett will show you how the Basuto peasants are being taught to sow strips of thick tufted grass along the contour at 'vertical intervals' of every six feet or so; how ploughing nowadays goes *along* the contour and not down it. Now grass strips to hold the rains are being grown upon the crests of hills; how dams are being built across *dongas*, and *dongas* planted with spreading poplars and other soil-holding trees of rapid growth.

All these things, Collett will explain, are to dam the downward flow of torrential rainwater, to slow it up sufficiently for the soil to absorb some of the water instead of itself being sucked away. This is the first stage in soil conservation; the second is to build up fertility. So the process of slowing the downward flow of water is followed by another, which consists in declaring the conserved area as temporarily banned for grazing or cultivation, and in sowing grass. Newly-planted meadows of Kikuyu grass can become a rich and permanent sward within

five years; and Kikuyu grass, say King and Collett, could be the saving of South Africa.

On the very face of it, then, Basutoland under British administration does far better than the great Reserve of the Transkei, for example, does under South African administration. In the Transkei there is little or no co-ordinated attempt at conservation; nor does the South African Administration enjoy enough confidence among the Africans to make such a co-ordinated attempt possible. In the last ten years, at any rate, Basutoland can point to great benefits from not being part of the Union. How recent this improvement is, at least from the standpoint of conservation, could be seen by anyone who took a car in 1951 and motored northward from Maseru toward Teyateyaneng: here Collett's work had still to be done, leaving the lowland soil in disastrous condition while across the Caledon the European farms looked rich and fertile.

Yet the face of it, as so often in Africa, is likely to mislead. Closely supervised, soil conservation succeeds, brings in golden returns, makes the desert bloom. But can the conservation be itself conserved? Will it last?

On the whole, say King and Collett, it will last. 'We have won the confidence and understanding of the chiefs and the peasants. They distrusted the work at first, obstructed it, practically revolted against it. But now they come to us, eagerly, and ask us when we are going to begin on this-and-this piece of land. That battle is over, and we've won it.'

'How do you get your results?'

'The tribal system. We couldn't do a thing without that. We explain these methods to the chiefs, and the chiefs pass down our orders to the villages, and the headmen of the villages see that the orders are carried out.'

'And do the people co-operate willingly? Do they understand the advantages they get?'

'On the whole, no. That is, they co-operate willingly, but they'd drop the whole thing tomorrow if we didn't constantly watch them.'

And the reasons for this reply, which can be taken as both expert and

BASUTOLAND (I)

well-disposed, raise the central problem of Basutoland and the other two High Commission Territories, the problem which the British Government has refused to tackle, the problem of development. This is the heart of the matter. The fruit is fine, but in it there resides a worm.

Most worthwhile opinions on the technical level, I found, were agreed that the Basuto peasantry are little more than passive spectators in the conservation of the soil of their country. It is not that the Administration of Basutoland is hectoring or unpopular: on the contrary, it is moulded in a much gentler and more human manner than its opposite number across the Caledon River: its comparative gentleness and humanity show once again how influential on the outlook of the whites themselves are the institutions under which they live and force the Africans to live. The Basuto obey the Administration's orders that are transmitted through their chiefs: they obey them and then, very often, they and the chiefs themselves later transgress them or fail to draw the right conclusions from them.

Perversity? Benighted ignorance? No: the Basuto people is neither stupid nor perverse. Whatever it thinks of the British, it does not hate them and fear them as the Africans of the Union hate and fear their white masters. It tolerates the British; it even rather likes the British. Like the peoples of Bechuanaland and Swaziland, it is violently averse from changing British for South African rule. Even the few I found who were bitterly critical of British administration were firm on this point: they do *not* want to go into the Union. Anything rather than that.

Then what prevents the Basuto from taking soil conservation to their hearts? There is nothing mysterious about the answer; for the answer is just plain poverty. The Basuto peasant, odd though it may sound, simply cannot afford soil conservation. His sources of income are two: he can go to the goldfields and he can graze livestock. It seems generally agreed of Basutoland what Professor Schapera has said authoritatively of Bechuanaland—that 'about four men in five have either been abroad in the past or are still away'. Because Basutoland, with over half a million inhabitants, is grossly overpopulated, there is in fact a steady permanent migration, despite all the obstacles and unpleasantness, into the Union. About half the people's income may come

from wage remittances by migrants: in 1943, since when things will not have changed, 74 per cent of Basuto miners were sending part of their wages home to their families in the colony.

The Basuto can also graze sheep or cattle. And it is at this point that soil conservation undertaken within the framework of the tribal system (as it has survived) becomes self-defeating. For the tribal system here has fallen with over-population to one of great and increasing poverty.

In their agricultural survey of Basutoland in 1949-50, made for the United Nations, Tennant and Douglas found that 11,000 families out of a total of 161,000 had no land at all, while 91,000 other families had less than the seven acres of arable which, with another seven acres of common grazing, might be enough to sustain life at a low but possible level. In order to achieve the advance in agricultural technique which is required if soil conservation is to be maintained and exploited, it would thus be necessary to institute some reform in land-holding that should carry with it a reform in methods of agriculture—a transformation from extensive to intensive cultivation, and the introduction of machinery on a co-operative basis. The technical enthusiasts of the British Administration see this very well: they also see—and their political colleagues will soon enlighten them if they don't—that to redistribute land will be to take land away from chiefs—to disorganize that very system of authority upon which conservation, and the whole pattern of 'indirect rule', is now founded.

The maintenance and exploitation of soil conservation also demands something else—in Basutoland as in the Transkei or any of the Reserves of the Union: a reduction in the claimants to land. There is needed, that is, not only a reform in the distribution and the use of the land, but also in the pattern of the whole economy that surrounds Basutoland. There is needed some form of non-agricultural development which could absorb a large number of Basuto peasants. This, too, would involve 'detribalization' and permanent settlement in towns. To some extent, haphazardly and cruelly, this already happens through 'leakage' into the Union—the urban settlements around Johannesburg, for example, are full of Basuto emigrants, in many cases the most intelligent and energetic of those available. But it does not happen in Basutoland.

BASUTOLAND (I)

And this is where the achievements of conservation in Basutoland—admirable though they are within their limits—pall before the failure or refusal of the British to develop the land and people. This is the failure or refusal that every careful observer, black or white, has noted in all three High Commission Territories as the overriding weakness of British policy. In Basutoland today there is not so much as a factory for processing native leather or native wool. The very blankets the people wear are made in England or the Union. Practically all commerce is in the hands of white traders who extract fat profits from this hungry people. A road into the interior was started in 1951, and hydro-electric schemes on the Orange were under discussion with the Union: but practical results in the growth of local industry are remote. By the same token, there is no effective apparatus of self-government except in the most embryonic form, although the people are manifestly ready for political advance.

British administration has conserved the Basuto people and their country: and much the same is true of the two other High Commission Territories, Swaziland and Bechuanaland. But by refusing to promote development, British administration has also delivered the Basuto into the hands of their worst enemies, the whites of South Africa. The Basuto, if he wants to get into the modern world, is given only one road to follow—the road to white South Africa.

BASUTOLAND (2)

WHILE in Maseru I spent an evening with some 'intellectuals'. The quotation marks are there not because these people were in any way ill-educated—one or two of them were highly educated—but because they represent a class of Africans which is set apart from its fellows, and which occupies a rather special place in southern Africa. This setting apart arises from the same inner contradiction in British policy as that which stultifies the effects of conservation; and it has equally noxious consequences.

Just as the logical follow-through for soil conservation is change in the structure of land holding and the methods of working the land, so the logical follow-through for educating Africans is to give them scope to use their education. But to give them this scope, just as to change the methods of land holding and agriculture, would require a transformation in the pattern of Basuto society that the British Government is neither equipped nor apparently desirous to realize. The same is true, of course, of the Union of South Africa; and true in a much wider and more urgent sense. The salvation of South Africa will depend upon changes in the pattern of society—changes which will enable the Africans to take an uninhibited part in developing their country, relieve over-population in rural areas, develop towns where Africans have permanent and proper quarters, and divorce the concentration of capital from hands incapable of using their power for social purposes.

'The Government is placed in a false position,' wrote a careful observer of Basutoland twenty years ago, 'of encouraging education with one hand, and of bolstering up with the other the authority that stultifies its results.'⁷³ The debased tribal system through which the British Administration conducts 'indirect rule' has no use or scope for educated Africans: the Administration has little or no use for them either.

BASUTOLAND (2)

'Intellectuals', consequently, are usually redundant. They are a nuisance to the Government, and the Government, accordingly, dislikes them and distrusts them. They get ideas above their station; they take the white man's democracy to mean what it says—rather in the manner of the early Christians with the Gospel—and they are notably disgruntled with their lot. Sometimes, even, they go to Oxford or Cambridge or London and mix with white men as their equals, only to return home to find that they themselves are not equal, but inexorably inferior. Educated Africans tend, then, to grow into that bugbear of the white South African—the 'agitator'—and begin to think and speak of African self-government as if it were something right and natural, instead of aping their white masters, who think of it as a plot upon white lives and property devised in about equal proportions by the Kremlin and the Fabian Society.

These Basuto intellectuals of whom I am speaking were unanimous about two things, though they differed a good deal among themselves on other points. The first was their aversion from any kind of association with the Union of South Africa and their preference for continued British protection. The second was their very sharp criticism of the British refusal to give a widening scope to the Basuto for self-government. 'We want to run our own affairs,' they said, 'but we shall never learn to do that unless we are given the chance of experience.' It may be easy for officials to sneer at such demands as the product of frustrated careerism; but the sneer, nowadays, is not enough. — the pace of social development, as with the pace of economic development, is appallingly slow: it is so slow, indeed, that one is hard put to detect any movement at all.

Though not quite so quick to resent as intolerable 'communism' any genuine protest from the people themselves, the Administration still has a truly South African tendency to cry havoc and let loose the C.I.D. The officials are trained, after all, in a policy which rests upon a contradiction, and in an atmosphere which breathes the same prejudice—though lightened by the mountain air—as white men breathe in the Union. This contradiction, with its accompanying atmosphere, was viable so long as the old order of imperialism seemed unshaken. Basuto-

IN BRITISH TERRITORY

land played no economic role other than to provide labour for the gold-fields—it was a Native Reserve indistinguishable from the Reserves of the Union but for the accident of British protection. To that end, the British have maintained what they are pleased to call the tribal system, but what is in reality no more than a poor caricature of it. This caricature functions as ‘indirect rule’—rule, that is, through chiefs who have become in time no more nor less than salaried officials, and who are unseated as and when it may please the paramount authority, which is no longer the tribe as it once was but is now the British Government. Yet the old tribal rule had not been autocracy, as this is. ‘It is rare to find in British Colonial Africa,’ writes Lord Hailey, ‘any instance in which the indigenous form of rule previously in force could be described as autocratic, and there are not many cases in which it could be described in a strict sense as authoritarian.’⁷⁴ Those white escapers from reality who praise the African in his ‘natural tribal state’ ignore the fact that the African in southern Africa is almost nowhere in his natural tribal state; and that this state, no matter what its merits may have been, has passed beyond recall into history. There is no going back to it.

If there is no going back to it, British policy in the High Commission Territories is equally framed to prevent any going forward to new forms of society. The Africans are held between the old and the new, unable to return to the old, prevented from advancing to the new. If they were not so held, after all, the supply of cheap labour for the gold-fields would dry up; the Basuto and their kindred peoples would demand rights and opportunities which white South Africa will not possibly grant them; and there would emerge a pattern of social progress in the High Commission Territories that could only throw into still harsher light the helotry of the Africans in the Union. Determined to be faced with no such ugly comparison, the Union Government watches jealously in case the Imperial Government should embark upon some perilous advancement in Basutoland, Bechuanaland, or Swaziland. So long as the three High Commission Territories are clamped in this half-protection, destined to ‘go into the Union’, and trammelled therefore by the influence of the Union Government, there can be little advance. This means, in practice, that any immediate progress for these

BASUTOLAND (2)

territories involves transferring them from the Commonwealth Relations Office, whose primary business is to maintain good relations with the Union, to the Colonial Office; and to make this transfer a preliminary to the development of genuine self-government.

Though determined to prevent development in the High Commission Territories, which they covet, white South Africans of both languages are not above vaunting the superior treatment which Africans can in certain respects receive in the Union. 'Hand them over to us,' they urge, 'for we will treat them better.' It is not an empty argument. In respect of education, it is even a strong argument: the Union maintains institutions such as Fort Hare (and mixed universities such as that of the University of the Witwatersrand), where Africans can graduate. In the Union there may be as many as forty or fifty African doctors (in an African population of nearly nine millions); in British territories as large and populous as Southern and Northern Rhodesia, not a single African doctor was in practice in 1951. In Bechuanaland there are no facilities whatsoever for secondary and vocational training (apart from one school established on his own initiative by Tshekedi Khama), and bursaries are provided for would-be students to go to the Union.

Unpleasant though life may be for the African in South Africa, the system of racial attrition has achieved at least one beneficial result. It has gone far towards destroying the tribal system, and, to that extent, towards liberating the Africans from the ties of superstition and from loyalties that are meaningless in terms of the modern world. Successive South African Governments have talked about maintaining the tribal system in all its splendid purity: their policies, even more surely than British 'indirect rule', have defeated this object. With one or two tribal exceptions—possibly the Venda and eastern Pondo—the majority of Africans in South Africa are inwardly 'detribalized' today. Progressively stripped of one pattern of loyalty and behaviour, the Africans reach out eagerly for another—only to be given by the white man the worst influences that racial perversion and urbanized slumdom can devise. Even so, the Africans persist: what is remarkable is how often their humanity has triumphed over their obstacles.

In the High Commission Territories, by contrast, all is still and stag-

nant. Such development schemes as are now in operation seem to proceed in a human vacuum. In Swaziland, for example, the Government has stimulated some excellent afforestation: yet Swaziland continues under the strongest 'tribal system' of all the Protectorates. The King of the Swazis, Sobhuza II, is said to be a man of energy and imagination: he is also one of the greatest sticklers for pagan etiquette to have survived, and his people live within a social pattern that has changed in no essential way for as long as anyone can remember. In Bechuanaland, true enough, the Government has lately promised to establish a Legislative Council, much overdue—but has at the same time ignored and over-ridden the clearly expressed wish of one of the principal tribes, the Bamangwato, for the return of Seretse Khama, their banished chief.

It is unfair to say that there is no development at all. Within the framework of the great contradiction—between conservation which should lead to development and basic assumptions which prevent development—there is a little, a very little. Producers' co-operatives are being encouraged in a small way. In Basutoland the Administration has bestirred itself on behalf of better tribal representation. But how reluctantly! In none of these territories has the British Government seized its great opportunity to develop representative government right through from the local to the legislative level.

The fault lies not with the local officials but with the makers of policy. Had the Labour Government determined in 1945 to instal some form of representative government in these territories, even though an elementary form, the difficult and complex but exceedingly necessary task would now be on its way to fulfilment. As it was, in Basutoland by 1950 the Administration had only got around to the notion of trying out the principal of secret voting for advisory councils. One of the nine district advisory councils was then elected by secret ballot; and this dangerous and revolutionary principle was to be cautiously extended. These district councils usually meet once a year and elect a National Council which also meets once a year; but the National Council has a majority of members nominated by the Paramount Chief, and is in any case only advisory. Can it be wondered that the educated minority in Basutoland, who suspect what representative government may really

BASUTOLAND (7)

mean and what steps are necessary in order to achieve it, dismiss this National Council for the fraud that it is? *Mochochonono*, the Basuto newspaper of Maseru, was calling it while I was there 'an aimless body of loudspeakers', and 'a sorry pack of pseudo-politicians'.⁷⁵

In Swaziland there can be no move towards social and political development because King Sobhuza is an autocrat, and the British are content to rule through King Sobhuza. In October 1951, true enough, the High Commissioner announced that a 'formal native authority' for Swaziland would be set up and given 'a large measure of judicial, financial, and executive authority', headed by the Paramount Chief.⁷⁶ But this did little more than bring Swaziland into line with the principle of 'indirect rule': it meant almost nothing in terms of political development towards genuine self-government. A legislative council for Swaziland was as far away as ever. In Bechuanaland there might be certain steps towards African self-government; but they have yet to be taken beyond the paper stage. The High Commissioner may be energetic and intelligent: his job, however, is merely to administer the territories pending their transfer to the Union. And the Union, of course, will most vigorously object to any social or political development which could prejudice the eventual right of the Union Government to tread on the necks of these Africans as thoroughly as it now treads on those of 'its own Africans'. So long, in short, as British policy is limited to conservation without development—which will be at least as long as it is taken for granted that these territories are to be joined to the Union in the near future—there is no real hope of improvement.

The point here is not that the British could industrialize these territories to the point where they might absorb their surplus population and totally transform their economy: manifestly that is impossible, for these territories are poor, and will possibly be always poor. They will never be able to live without the rest of southern Africa. The point is that vigorous social and other advance could set an example in African self-development from which both whites and non-whites in the Union could learn much. Such advance could make it certain that the peoples of these territories were not to suffer the same gruelling fate as their brothers in the Union. Such advance, indeed, was implicit in the

responsibilities which the British undertook when they assumed the 'protection' of these peoples.

Policies of stagnation in Basutoland and elsewhere tend to be justified by British authorities on the ground that the Africans are 'not yet ready for changes in their favour'. The Africans, it seems, would not know how to use such changes. Long since threadbare, the argument is now past using by anyone who is prepared to face realities as they are and not as they ought to be. One of these realities, disagreeable past easy belief, was the outbreak in 1947 and 1948 of a wave of *diretlo* or 'medicine murders' in Basutoland. Such murders have been neither peculiar to Basutoland nor recent in origin. Records of them exist for Basutoland since 1895; and they certainly occurred before that. They consist in the mutilation of living persons or their corpses with the object of obtaining pieces of flesh for 'medicine' which should 'strengthen' the taker. They are not so difficult to record as it might seem, because part of the ritual consists in exposing the mutilated corpse in a reasonably public place.

In 1945 nine such murders were recorded, but the number dropped to two in the following year. In 1947 the number rose again to twelve and in 1948 there were twenty. What was even more disagreeable, some of the leading chiefs were thought to be implicated. In the event, though some of the key facts and motives are still far from clear, several chiefs were tried, found guilty, and hanged: one of them, at least, was by general agreement a man of advanced and educated views who was also a convert to the Roman Catholic Church. The circumstances were later investigated on behalf of the Secretary for Commonwealth Relations by Mr. G. I. Jones, a lecturer in anthropology at the University of Cambridge, whose lucid report on the subject repays study.⁷⁷

Much of what Mr. Jones had to say about the motives of these particular murders has a direct bearing on the consequences for the Basuto of losing their old culture while being denied access to another. 'One finds in Basutoland,' he writes, 'an unspecialized class system with an unduly large ruling class of chiefs and headmen, supported by a subsidized peasantry, largely dependent on the earnings of its menfolk

BASUTOLAND (2)

employed in the Union, unable to grow enough food even for its own needs and unwilling to export any of its redundant livestock to pay for it: a society in fact which is both anachronistic and insecure.'

'This feeling of insecurity,' Mr. Jones continues, 'finds its most obvious expression in the intensification of the Basuto belief in magical supernatural aids usually referred to as "medicines".' One of these 'medicines'—'recently become fashionable with the ruling class'—is medicine murder. Primary cause of these murders, Mr. Jones found, was 'the general belief of the Basuto and other South African Bantu in the efficacy of magical concoctions'. But the secondary causes—'the reasons why they suddenly became so frequent and fashionable'—were 'almost entirely political'. And these political reasons, in turn, were each derived from the rivalry and multiplication of chiefs and tribal authorities: reasons, Mr. Jones concluded, which were intensified by the political changes 'from the top downwards' that were introduced by the Government since 1943. Designed to make 'indirect rule' more 'indirect'—to give, that is, a more truly 'tribal' appearance to the chiefs' authority—these changes merely served to increase the sense of uncertainty and insecurity which the chiefs themselves felt about their future: and they did this, being made 'from the top downwards', without a compensating growth of the people's involvement in government.

Other factors, also consequent upon white influence, have indirectly served to deepen this sense of insecurity, of being 'held half-way between the old and the new way of life, of being without sure and certain landmarks. Among these factors must be reckoned the rivalry between different Christian missions. By 1920 most of the Basuto were converted to Christianity, their form of worship being mainly that of the Paris Evangelical Mission, whose pastors had worked in the country ever since Casalis arrived in the thirties of the last century. Moshesh, 'ancestor' of the Basuto, was P.E.M.S. 'A man may not be a member of the P.E.M.S., but Christianity to him means the doctrine taught by that Mission. The Roman Catholics, though they have been in the country since 1862, remained for a long time insignificant in numbers and influence. Their turn came on, in the present century, when increased funds and personnel, derived mainly from French Canada,

enabled them to launch an evangelizing mission which has continued unabated ever since.'

Roman Catholic missionaries found that their task was not so much to convert heathens as heretics: their drive 'became directed not merely against "heathenism" but also against "Lutheranism".' By so doing 'it filled the average Basuto with perplexity and made him feel that life was much more difficult. Formerly he had only to choose between his native religion and Christianity. Now he had to choose between two very different doctrines, and was in danger of becoming a heretic which was something far worse than being a heathen and placed him in danger of hell fire.' What was a man to believe? Where was his place in life?

The administrative remedy for this sense of social insecurity, Mr. Jones found, was largely in the recognition and consolidation of organs of local government at the very bottom, and the bridging of the 'widening gulf between the Administration and the common people.' More than that, the primary object of Government should be to define, explain, and keep clearly in view the goal of making Basutoland 'capable of the greatest possible degree of local self-government within the framework of the British Commonwealth and whatever system is evolved for southern Africa'. In other words, the Basuto people must begin to govern itself. To talk in these circumstances of the Basuto not yet being ready for self-government, is manifestly to talk nonsense.

Mr. Jones, it is true, was cautious in his recommendations; yet it is impossible to read his report and reach any other conclusion than that the society of Basutoland can be saved from crisis and collapse only by bold and immediate advance towards self-government. If it is to mean anything, such advance must carry with it the recognition of the right of the Basuto people to independence, national independence. For Basutoland, with other territories in Africa, is entering now upon the pains that accompany the birth of a nation. White South Africa may not like this: but white South Africa, standing by so eagerly to strangle the infant, has disqualified itself from any right to give advice.

'The said Tribe of the Basuto,' proclaimed Sir Philip Wodehouse in the Queen's name over eighty years ago, 'shall be . . . for all intents and

BASUTOLAND (2)

purposes, British subjects.' Alas, what intents? and what purposes? It is surely time to make good this undertaking.

Basutoland, as in lesser degree Swaziland and Bechuanaland, gives the British a rare opportunity to help change the present destiny of southern Africa which, so far, they have refused to take. So long as they persist in that refusal, they abdicate from their responsibilities and show themselves not one whit the more enlightened, humane, or intelligent than South Africans for whom the African must remain a 'kaffir' and a slave.

SOUTHERN RHODESIA

IT is fashionable in England to throw the blame for racial tension in South Africa entirely at the Afrikaans-speaking community. It is also fashionable among many English-speaking South Africans. If it were not for these Dutchmen, one hears, things would have gone quite differently. One is accordingly tempted to wonder what South Africa would be like today if van Riebeeck and his followers had not been Dutchmen but Englishmen. And the wondering need not be vain: for there is a land in southern Africa which gives the answer. You can reach its capital, Salisbury, by three or four hours' flying northward from Johannesburg.

The capital of Southern Rhodesia is a fresh and handsome town into which the immigrants of 1951 were flowing at the rate of about five hundred a month, or several times the number for whom accommodation better than tent or shack was available. 'One forgets how many men there are in Africa nowadays,' remarked a fruity voice on Salisbury airport, 'that one used to know in England.' For the whole country the immigration rate was running at about 16,000 a year: young men from England and Scotland, a sprinkling of young women, much-prized in a community uncomfortably short of them, married couples homeward bound from abandoned India who sought a white man's country where domestic servants were still to be had, middle-aged and elderly people for whom England and English income-tax had become disagreeable, a steady flow of Afrikaners and their wives. . . . Capital was flowing in, too; partly from concerns that had transferred their affairs from London, partly from the United States, partly from South Africa: and all about the town, on the outskirts where the roads dribble into the bush, new factories were going up. Southern Rhodesia, like South Africa, was steering hard for industrialism.

SOUTHERN RHODESIA

All manner of people converged upon Salisbury. Across the breakfast table was a former sergeant of the Highland Division whose present business was 'draggin' oot crocs' in distant Tanganyika, and who was down in Salisbury to taste for a week or so the wonders of civilization and to see his girl. The leading politician's secretary was a smart young man from an English university whose two or three years of residence had already made him sure that 'nobody at home' could understand 'our problems out here'. A distinguished British commando officer, resident in Southern Rhodesia since 1945, was devising new names for old servitudes as to the manner born. The town was full of eager people with their minds bent on big money, on big careers, on cutting loose from poor old England where 'opportunities' were now, alas, so few and far between.

Salisbury itself suggested something between an English county town where the lower orders have acquired black skins, and one of the stuffier London suburbs—down to the coltish boys and girls in dinner jackets and long dresses on Saturday nights for dining and dancing, the earnest little Baptist group at the corner, preaching to an absent audience, and the hubbub in the bar lounge. This was the bracing mental climate of Wimbledon crossed with Cheltenham Spa: but scarlet bougainvillea fired the quiet residential roads, and the houses were bungalows, and the laurels pointsettia. The form, if not the content, was African for all that man could do.

At the Legislative Council the busts of Rhodes and Jameson confront each other, sentinels of Southern Rhodesia. On the Government bench, impatient of fools, sits Sir Godfrey Huggins remembering Rhodes. Southern Rhodesia was intended as a white man's country: and it has remained a white man's country. 'I have given the European a flying start, and if he is not good enough to keep in the front after being given a flying start, well, I admit it is going to be awkward. . . .' Sir Godfrey Huggins said it; but Rhodes might have.⁷⁸

Rhodes sent Mofiat, Rudd, and others into the lands north of the Limpopo to secure mineral rights; and secured them. In 1888 Lobengula, chief of the Matabele whom M. Jikazi had brought over the Limpopo after disastrous battles with the Boers, gave Rudd the great

concession upon which the British South Africa Company founded its wealth. In 1933 the Company, cashing in once more, sold its mineral rights to the Southern Rhodesian Government for the tidy sum of two million pounds.

Two economic factors presided over the birth of Southern Rhodesia: gold and land. In reverse order from South Africa, the gold came first: otherwise the factors have worked in the same way. There is no Witwatersrand in Southern Rhodesia; the gold mines are many and small. But the system is the same. They are worked by cheap migrant labour; the labour, if anything, being cheaper than in South Africa. In 1950, 69 per cent of about 60,000 'mining natives' came from other territories, mostly from Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia. In contrast with the great numerical concentrations of the Rand, in 1950 only two Southern Rhodesian mines were employing more than 2,000 African miners; and 486 out of 518 mines were employing less than 300 each. The average yearly earnings of an African miner in 1949 stood officially at £34.⁷⁸

In South Africa the Native Reserves occupy about 10 per cent of the country. In Southern Rhodesia land available for African occupation or purchase occupies as much as a third of the country: on the face of it, a better proportion. But the populations are scarcely in the same position. In South Africa in 1951 there were about 2½ million whites to 9 million non-whites: in Southern Rhodesia there were no more than 150,000 whites to 2 million non-whites. Of all Africans in employment in Southern Rhodesia in 1949 nearly 40 per cent were employed in agriculture: their average yearly wage stood officially at £28.

The industrial revolution in Southern Rhodesia is several stages behind that of South Africa. By 1949, even so, more than 11 per cent of the African labour force was employed in manufacturing, and the average yearly wage stood officially at £42. Both figures were rising. Taking 1938 as 100, the index of physical volume of output for non-mining industry rose to 253 by 1946, to 293 by 1947, and to 346 by 1948. In the ten years 1939-48, employment in manufacturing almost trebled. During 1948 a small open-hearth furnace initiated the making of steel in Southern Rhodesia: others were planned. Production of

electric energy increased by more than four times between 1938 and 1948.

Necessary facts, if dull, because they explain where Southern Rhodesia differs from South Africa, and where it does not. Essentially, the differences are small: with two economies so nearly of the same pattern, they could scarcely be great. These non-essential differences are to be found not in the broad lines of development, which run parallel in both countries, but in a more reasonable administration and, consequently, a less exasperated racial atmosphere. Perhaps it is really that the white man has occupied South Africa for three centuries, but Southern Rhodesia for little more than half a century.

Most Southern Rhodesian settlers resent the suggestion that their 'native policies' are identical with those of the Union. 'The Union,' they say, 'is heading for disaster: but we shall take a different course.' Perhaps they will: or perhaps history will take it for them. All they have managed to do so far is to find different names for the same course. As Professor Carrington has pointed out, the settlers introduced a policy of racial segregation immediately they acquired self-government in 1923: and it helps little to call this segregation 'parallel development', or the 'two-pyramid policy', or some other long and learned name. Most manifestly, it is segregation; or, in Afrikaans, *apartheid*.

In granting self-government to Southern Rhodesia in 1923, the Imperial Government made shift to provide proper safeguards against racial discrimination. 'Any law,' declares the Southern Rhodesian Constitution, 'save in respect of the supply of arms, ammunition, or liquor to natives, whereby natives may be subjected or made liable to any conditions, disabilities, or restrictions to which persons of European descent are not also subjected or made liable,' must have the prior approval of the Secretary of State in London. The fact that no Secretary of State in London has ever once made use of this power of veto is no evidence for believing that he should not have done so. For nearly thirty years the Southern Rhodesian settlers have been busy clamping disability after disability, and restriction after restriction, upon the Africans into whose lands they came original: not as conquerors but as concessio naires and traders.

Unless the settlers were prepared to forego their claim to build in Southern Rhodesia a great white colony which should dominate Central Africa, there was nothing else they could do. Once they admitted in practice what their Constitution forced them to admit in theory—that the rights of the black man should be equal with those of the white—their claims to supremacy and dominion would be finished. But they had, and have, no intention of admitting any such thing; and one of their leading apologists, N. H. Wilson, is himself the author of a project for the intensive White development of British Central Africa.⁸⁰

Mr. Wilson finds *apartheid* in South Africa a stupid and barbaric doctrine: while being careful to avoid the word 'segregation' in his own proposals, he nonetheless prescribes what seems to be exactly the same system. He wants the white man to be able to develop within one territorial area, and the African within another: those Africans who are able to 'adapt themselves to the European's economy' are to be allowed, however, to enter the European area. Once there, they are to be enabled to develop, it seems, according to their talents, but not, of course, to the point of 'reaching the top'. To 'reach the top', they must return to the African area.

On paper, no doubt, this may sound more hopeful than the outlook in South Africa. Mr. Wilson no doubt believes it is more hopeful. Yet in theory it is no different from the latest definitions of *apartheid*, which admit that total segregation is impossible. In practice, Mr. Wilson is ignoring almost all the conditioning factors. He is ignoring, above all, the fact that the white economy of Southern Rhodesia is founded upon the principle of cheap African labour, and that the Africans are fettered by disabilities which make it impossible for them to develop either in their Reserves or in the 'European's area'.

Nor is Mr. Wilson very representative of what the bulk of settlers think and want. He may have the backing of Sir Godfrey Huggins: reality speaks a more brutal language. We will ignore Mr. Charles Olley, already quoted, as being unrepresentative. The average settler's ideas about Native Policy have been possibly nearer to those of the late Mr. Noakes, formerly a member of the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Noakes had a rather limited acquaintance with general ideas, but he was

always ready, like Mr. Olley, to speak his mind. 'It is rather an interesting fact,' he said in a speech in November 1944, 'that some years ago I was ill and was lent a Roman Catholic book on political economy, and it was the first time I had seen in a book on political economy a whole chapter on the backward races of the world. In this chapter it was suggested and worked out extremely well and logically, that the finest thing for the backward races was a long term of *benevolent* serfdom.' A revolutionary thought, no doubt, but Mr. Noakes was mindful of the established order. 'I think there is a lot in that,' he pursued thoughtfully, 'but for this difficulty, that I do not think we have progressed far enough, for human nature to justify and make possible benevolent serfdom.'¹

Still, there is a difference from South Africa at least in tone. 'I do not think' Noakes went on, for there is no doubt that he meant well, 'that hon. members have any idea of the effect it will have on the efficiency of the natives if they are decently treated.' Both Major Beadle and Mr. Leggatt, in the same debate, saw the need to increase African purchasing power. Mr. Davies said that 'some of our actions do not bear examination. . . . We give facilities for the introduction of native labour in order that we should keep down the rate of pay, and the consequences are that more than 50 per cent of the native labour force of the Colony of Southern Rhodesia is alien native labour.'

It is when one comes to consider the last few years, above all, that the similarities with South Africa become most striking. The Urban Areas Act has given parliamentary sanction to the municipal custom of segregating Africans in special locations. A Subversive Activities Act has provided legislation which is closely similar to that of the South African Act for the 'Suppression of Communism'. Trade union rights are denied to Africans. African co-operatives are frowned upon or frustrated. The industrial colour bar remains as rigid as possible.

There is probably no better test of any 'Native Policy' than its attitude towards African urbanization. In South Africa, as we have seen, the general practice has been to give the African no security of urban tenure. As the Stallard Doctrine held, the African was to come into the towns only to 'minister to the needs of the white man' and was to 'depart therefrom as soon as he ceases so to minister'. Even so, the

growth of industry during the first world war did lead to the establishment of native townships, such as Alexandra, on the outskirts of Johannesburg; and in these native townships the African was given, at least in theory, the security of freehold tenure. He could buy his plot, and he could live on it: in theory, nobody could put him out. In practice, of course, he borrowed the money and the bond-holder could put him out: but the principle of permanent urban settlement was nonetheless admitted.

Southern Rhodesia, by contrast, is in some respects pre-Alexandra. Not even in the new Native Townships that were planned in 1951 (but not yet built) were the Africans to enjoy freehold tenure. And although the need for African housing in Salisbury and Bulawayo, the two cities of Southern Rhodesia, is little short of frantic, the Government finds time to talk about building Native Townships in the rural Reserves, where the absence of industry means, of course, that they are not really needed at all. Instead of facing up to the facts of racial integration which flow from expanding industry, the whites of Southern Rhodesia (even more than of South Africa) think fondly of segregating Africans from Europeans by 'developing the Reserves'. Instead of abolishing the whole concept of Reserves—and that is what the peaceful and efficient development of Southern Rhodesia or of any part of Africa must mean—the white community talks and thinks of solutions that are always segregation, segregation . . . and acts in that spirit.

Muddle, not malice, seems to be the guiding star. If one attempts to analyse the ideas which lay behind discriminatory Bills such as that for the improvement of 'native husbandry', for example, one seems to be confronted not so much with deliberate intent to cause harm and suffering as with a sheer confusion of motive. The object of this Bill, introduced successively in 1950 and then in modified form in 1951, was admirably simple. The Native Reserves are badly farmed, partly from ignorance and superstition (in the matter of cattle, for instance), and partly because too many able-bodied men are absent for long intervals in the white man's towns. It was thought desirable, accordingly, both to force Africans to give more attention to their lands, and to discourage Africans from working in the town while retaining their cattle in the

SOUTHERN RHODESIA

Reserve. By making town-dwelling Africans liable for compulsory labour in rural areas, a strong indirect pressure was to be applied to Africans to surrender their cattle. 'Absentee grazing', in other words, was to be brought gradually to an end.

In itself, no doubt, the object of this Bill was very desirable. But the methods proposed were typically indifferent to African feelings and the ways of African society. The number of permanently urbanized Africans was to be increased, and this was something that the white man in Southern Rhodesia, expanding his business and his manufacturing, greatly needed. But having surrendered his refuge in the countryside—as well as the cattle to which he attaches such inordinate importance—the African was not to be given in exchange any form of safe tenure in the towns. He was not to be attracted to permanent urban settlement by better wages and living conditions. He was to live as he has always lived with the white man—as an inferior servant denied any hope of self-improvement—in a location, a special part of the town put aside for him; and he was to live there for all eternity as a *tenant*. Freehold tenure was to be denied him. He must, in the words of the Stallard Commission, 'enter and minister to the white man's needs'. If he still persisted in retaining cattle in the countryside, then he was to give sixty days' compulsory labour every year—exchanging for that period his urban job at perhaps £4 a month for the sum of twenty-eight shillings a month. No wonder he showed little enthusiasm for such dubious beneficence. . . .

The dilemma is indeed acute. Many white men in Southern Rhodesia, proud of their country and their own achievements, have become aware of the dangers of soil erosion and impoverishment which threaten both land and people. This Native Land Husbandry Bill was one of several attempts to ward off such dangers. But it failed to do more than propose one more act of discrimination against the Africans, precisely because it was conceived by men who see everything in terms of a permanent and necessary white supremacy. No doubt the cure for bad farming is better farming: yet better farming is possible only when the farmers are raised to a higher cultural level. However much the white community

may want the Africans to practise better farming, it remains effectively and even passionately opposed to the Africans enjoying a higher cultural level. Since, therefore, the normal incentives of civilization are to be denied to Africans—the incentives that flow from the opportunity for self-improvement—then Africans must simply be coerced into better farming. And when Africans resent this coercion, and show themselves slow to co-operate, they are labelled as 'irresponsible children', or worse. . . .

You will find among white men in Southern Rhodesia the same unwillingness to analyse the basic facts of their situation that you find in South Africa. Although for years past it has stood out as plain as a pike-staff that the future of Southern Rhodesia will mean intensive industrialization, self-confident settlers are still to be found who deplore 'the drift to the towns'. In the same parliamentary debate as the one from which I have already quoted—and it is one that might be doubled for its sentiments in almost any legislative year—a Hollander Member, Mr. Smit, said that 'we have to prevent that drift to the towns which has been so greatly brought to our notice of late years'. Women, he held, should be prevented in any case from entering the towns, since this would dissuade the men from staying away from their Reserves. Mr. Smit, no doubt, had the best of intentions: he saw the end of tribal life as a disaster for the Africans. Yet it would be difficult to find a more ox-like indifference to economic fact, to the realities of life.

Well might Sir Godfrey Huggins, a dangerous Jacobin compared with Mr. Smit, protest that 'the Europeans insist on this drift to the towns. They insist on having this native labour. . . . We cannot exist for five minutes without the native today. He is absolutely essential to our wage structure if nothing else.' Sir Godfrey was letting the cat out of the bag with a vengeance: 'If we went on a purely European basis with the present conditions of living and pay—I am not complaining about them, but merely pointing out a fact—the country would be sub-economic and down and out in five minutes.'⁸² Bravo! A little more honesty like this, and problems might be simpler.

The white townsman, in short, needs cheap African labour more urgently than ever. He is constantly in competition with the white

farmer for it. Without cheap African labour, he would soon be bankrupt—or forced to change his way of life and government. But now, at this point, he runs straight into his great dilemma again. He discovers what the South African manufacturer is now discovering—that cheap labour is usually bad labour, and balanced by high production costs. And yet more efficient labour, better paid labour, would also mean for the Africans the achievement of a higher cultural level. And a higher cultural level . . . ends in something that looks precious like equality. . . .

Between the two evils, evidently, it is necessary to make a choice, even though the choice may be unpleasant. And so the level of African wages, of the African standard of living, is kept down even though a higher level would yield new demands for consumer goods which only the white man's factories can supply—since a higher level would also threaten the white man's supremacy. Industrialization, no doubt, will one day break through this dilemma in Southern Rhodesia as surely as it is already breaking through it in South Africa. If factories need more efficient African labour, then more efficient labour they will get: even though the white man may stand agl'ast at the process he has set in motion.

As yet, the process is scarcely visible. Though the racial atmosphere in the towns of Southern Rhodesia is certainly better than in the Union, it is hard to say that the physical conditions are much better. Not only is the principle of freehold urban tenure denied to the Africans: African wages in manufacturing are less than half of what they are in the Union. And the 'locations'? Are they any better than further south? Let us turn to Sir Godfrey again. 'Now the position is perfectly well known to every hon. member,' he said in that same debate in 1944. 'We have all read the reports and know the conditions [of the locations]. We know they are filthy.' Yet the white community is making money hand over fist; and the municipalities, whose business it should be to abolish these filthy locations, are—the words are Sir Godfrey's—'enormously rich'. It is fair to add that conditions have somewhat improved in the locations of Salisbury and Buluwayo since 1944: yet Sir Godfrey's strictures are still essentially just.

The white man in Southern Rhodesia, in short, is behaving towards

the non-white man with the same mixture of indifference and ignorance—not forgetting some individual philanthropy as well—as the early capitalists of England showed towards their labouring men and women. The early capitalists, after all, believed that social equality of employer and employed was not only bad, but impossible: only decades of bitter struggle proved them wrong, and many have still to learn the lesson. Until how recently could one hear it said in England that ‘council houses’ should not have baths—since the poor would only put their coal in them? The answer was not to teach people to take baths, but to keep them bathless: for to teach them would be to raise them culturally, socially . . . and the end of that, indeed, would be equality. No matter what fine words and good intentions may take the air in Southern Rhodesia, accordingly, the end of the matter is racial discrimination. Southern Rhodesians do not like being pressed on this point, for they consider that they are making a fine thing of their country, and deserve credit for it. Yet men and women who understand so little of the history of civilization in the last hundred years or so, know so little of the world they live in, and show themselves so little anxious of learning, are in a poor position to complain when the outside world finds them wanting in humanity and good sense.

The spirit of the laws in Southern Rhodesia—the spirit of discrimination—was again manifest in an Act of 1951 that narrowed down the right to vote in parliamentary elections by the raising of property qualifications from an income of £100 a year or possession of property of £150, to an income of £240 a year or possession of property of £500, a measure clearly intended to restrict the number of Africans who might vote. Southern Rhodesia’s common voters’ roll is a matter of much pride among the more liberal-minded settlers: yet by November 1951 no more than 453 Africans had managed to find a place upon it. But why, if Southern Rhodesia’s ‘native policy’ is really different from South Africa’s, should the Government now make it harder for Africans to vote? What is the point of having a common roll if the qualifications are to be fixed so that none but a handful of relatively wealthy Africans can hope to qualify for it?

SOUTHERN RHODESIA

The answer is not far to seek. 'Of course I do not mind leaving the common roll for a time,' said Sir Godfrey in 1944, 'but hon. members must realize that the time will come, and it will not be so very long, when if you leave matters exactly where they are, the African members of this country will control this House. . . . The time will come when the common roll has to go. . . .'

Hon. members realized this very well. Some of them pressed the Government to abolish the common roll altogether—an action which Sir Godfrey's United Party soon enough promised to perform. In the event, Sir Godfrey consulted Southern Rhodesia's reputation in the world (or was it perhaps that a discreet word was dropped by the Commonwealth Relations Office, having in mind the prospect of Central African federation?) and persuaded his party merely to raise the qualifications of franchise, rather than abolish the franchise altogether. Abolition of the franchise, after all, would have flagrantly equated Southern Rhodesia with Nationalist South Africa.

But here, in little, there resides the whole sad story. Should Africans be so ambitious and persistent as to overcome the handicaps of living in a 'filthy' location, not to speak of all their other handicaps, and earn £100 a year (with wages in manufacturing at £42 a year and in agriculture at £28 a year), steps must at once be taken to stop them from voting. *Their* franchise, at any rate in practice, must be abolished.

'Some months ago,' said a member of the Legislative Assembly in November 1944, when the political climate, be it remembered, was a good deal more temperate than in 1951, 'my hon. leader [Sir Godfrey Huggins] stated at a meeting that in the Bulawayo Location there were 8,000 incipient voters who could be placed on the voters' roll. That is a fact and that is the way we are going today. . . .' The speaker, Captain Whittington, proceeded to advocate a separate roll, just like the Nationalists in South Africa.⁸³

Matters came to a head when some of these 'incipient voters' began to take an interest in politics. The Southern Rhodesia Labour Party—not to be confused with the Labour Party pure and simple, a much more cautious body—was approached by Africans with a request for membership of their party. These liberal-minded citizens thereupon

decided to form a special branch of their party which Africans might join. They worked for members among 'incipient voters', and they began to get them. There arose the possibility, for the first time, that Africans in Southern Rhodesia might be able to use their votes in a partisan sense just like the white men.

But the idea of political equality in the matter of voting was too much for many members even of the Southern Rhodesia Labour Party. Gradually the party lost ground. When none but a handful of stalwarts was left and the party was powerless, Sir Godfrey went into action. He raised the franchise qualifications high above the heads of most of the 'incipient eight thousand'. No doubt, when necessary, the ceiling will be raised again. . . .

White men in Southern Rhodesia insist that 'things here are better than in the Union'. They do not hate 'their' Africans as the white man in the Union, they assert, hates 'his'. The 'racial atmosphere', they argue, is far better than in the Union. All that may possibly be true: hatred comes from a sense of insecurity, from fear, and this sense of insecurity is not yet risen here to the point of near-panic that is often present in South Africa. Many white settlers no doubt sincerely want to take a different path from that of the Union: I met a number who were certainly sincere in this. I met white men and women who were devoting their lives to the education and social welfare of the Africans. For such a small community, Southern Rhodesia has a surprisingly large number of these brave and selfless individuals. But apart from a handful of people of this kind, I met nobody who was prepared to analyse the facts of Southern Rhodesian society with the courage and persistence which the vast majority of settlers put to the service of their own careers.

Most white men in this huge and undeveloped country justify their claim to superiority over the Union by the fact of the 'racial atmosphere' being better. Yet it is not by the state of affairs at any one time that one may chiefly judge a society, but by the *trend* of affairs. And the trend of government, of treatment of the Africans, is essentially identical in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. Nothing jumps from a

reading of debates in the Legislative Assembly more clearly than this: that the *trend* is the same as in South Africa. Wade through any of the big debates on 'Native policy' during the past few years, and you will find that the basic assumptions of the legislators of Salisbury are identical with those of the legislators of Cape Town.

It would be tedious to labour the point. But one example may be allowed. In June 1950 a Mr. Young introduced a motion which expressed great anxiety over the future of white settlement in Central Africa—an anxiety, as he truly said, that was shared by settlers in East Africa as well. His central point was the need for a big immigration of new settlers capable of providing a white labour force in town and country. Without this labour force, he inferred, there could be no effective segregation of black from white; and without this effective segregation there could be no guarantee of the 'permanence' of white settlement in Central Africa. It was clear, though, that what Mr. Young was really talking about in his long and interesting speech was not the permanence of white settlement so much as the permanence of white supremacy. He was patently incapable of visualizing white settlement in Central Africa on terms of equality of opportunity with the Africans.

There is no need to argue that Mr. Young was imbued with hostile feelings towards the Africans. It is very likely, indeed, that he regarded them with a good deal of paternalist affection. No doubt he was kind to his servants. He probably permitted them, when they were married, to live together on his property—and felt, in so doing, that he was showing his superior enlightenment over South Africans who insisted on marital segregation among their domestics. But if Mr. Young was not hard-hearted, he was most desperately ill-informed. He was capable of the most ludicrous of arguments in support of his thesis. He was ready to ignore everything that scientists have had to say about the innate equality of white men and black men: indeed, of all men. He could say in his speech that the white men in Central Africa must take the Africans in trust just as the Romans in Britain had taken the Britons in trust . . . as if there were the slightest real parallel between the two. He could in any case ignore two thousand years of human history and experience, and say: 'Let us behave as the Romans behaved'—while

being careful to forget, of course, that the Romans knew nothing of racial segregation, and accepted a 'barbarian' as their emperor in the natural order of things. . . . And Mr. Young, alas! was legislating in a country where the growth of non-mining industry makes a skilled, self-conscious, and educated African labour force both inevitable and desirable. He was clearly not up to the task.

'I maintain,' said Mr. Wise, supporting Mr. Young in a debate on Mr. Young's motion in January 1951, 'it will be hundreds of years before the natives will be in a position to carry out political administration. . . .' And this, mind you, in a country that is moving fast into an industrial revolution in which the Africans are most intimately involved. Without African industrial labour—and Sir Godfrey Huggins said it, not some impertinent visitor—Southern Rhodesia would be down and out in five minutes . . . and yet this industrial labour is not to be in a position to carry out political administration for 'hundreds of years'. . . .

In Mr. Wise's speech, as in Mr. Young's, the real anxiety of white settlers kept peeping through. It is to avoid—just as in South Africa—anything which may threaten the basis of white supremacy. Mr. Wise, too, was anxious for a permanent white labour-force. There were 'probably over 75,000 natives in domestic service' (in a white community of less than 150,000): therefore we must bring in more white men and women to take the place of these natives. Like Mr. Young, Mr. Wise seemed to be living in a Cloud-Cuckoo-Land where the realities of life in the rest of the world would not intrude. He talked of Danes, Scandinavians, Italians, who might be brought to Southern Rhodesia. 'In the Po Valley there are a million unemployed. . . .' Some of them might be induced to emigrate. But under certain conditions! There must be no immigration of unruly people who wanted to change the natural order of society. 'The screening has to be very, very close because we must not allow people into this country from the Continent of Europe who have Communistic tendencies or are in any way anti-British. . . .' It would be interesting to know just how many Italian unemployed from the Po Valley could hope to pass through Mr. Wise's screen: could be relied upon, that is, not to 'tend' to make

common cause with the downtrodden Africans against an order of society which trod on them as well.

Summing up, then, does the attitude towards Africans of white men in Southern Rhodesia differ from that of white men in South Africa? In form, yes, there may be many differences: in essential content there is evidently none. The economics and the prejudices of a society founded on 'cheap labour' govern all. The most that can be said is that white men in Southern Rhodesia have yet to poison race relations to the point that they are poisoned in South Africa. They can reverse engines with infinitely less pain to themselves; they can change direction with much less effort. It is also true, however, that they show no signs of meaning to change direction. However much they may lament conditions in South Africa, they do not draw the obvious conclusion for themselves. After all, the dangers of explosion in Southern Rhodesia are still distant: meanwhile, the chances of making money are many and immediate. So the ruthless and wasteful exploitation of the Africans—necessary, as Sir Godfrey Huggins said, to 'free enterprise' in Southern Rhodesia, as elsewhere—continues without restraint. Having got much, the white man in Southern Rhodesia is bent upon getting more.

What happens, though, when white settlers are *not* given a free hand to run things as they will? The answer lies northward again across the great Zambezi River. In less than two hours the aeroplane will take you over the dun-brown bushland into Northern Rhodesia, where the white settler has yet to achieve self-government. All this unending land is 'the new central country' which David Livingstone opened up—and lost his life in doing it—for the elevation of the inhabitants'. Would he, coming back now, be totally ashamed?

NORTHERN RHODESIA

ONE thousand miles to the northward, Northern Rhodesia still moves within the orbit of the land of Goli. Recruiting agents of the South African gold mines are established here, although from Northern Rhodesia they are allowed to take no more than 3,500 recruits a year. But many other recruits depart for the smaller gold mines in Southern Rhodesia: according to the census of 1946, there were 28,000 Northern Rhodesian migrants working in Southern Rhodesia, and another 5,700 in the Union of South Africa. Like Basutoland and Bechuanaland and neighbouring Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia forms a reservoir for cheap migrant labour for mining operations; and this, today as yesterday, is Northern Rhodesia's most important economic function within the pattern of white supremacy in southern and central Africa.

Yet it was not for labour that Cecil Rhodes was searching when he sent his agents across the Zambezi sixty years ago. He wanted 'land, not niggers'; and he wanted land not for growing food but for digging underneath. Thus the 'treaty' which F. E. Lochner, Rhodes's agent, signed with the Barotse monarch, Lewanika, on June 27, 1890—'codifying' the Rudd Concession which preceded it—conferred on the British South Africa Company not only the obligation to 'protect' this territory but also the 'right', exclusive and untrammelled, to exploit it for mining and for commerce. The inverted commas are necessary, because Lewanika conferred rights which for the most part he had no power to confer, because the 'protection' had the possessive meaning it always acquired with Rhodes and his agents, and because the right to development had implications of which Lewanika, perhaps needless to say, had not the slightest inkling.

The minerals were there all right, though it was many years before

the British South Africa Company seriously undertook to find them and remove them. To Lochner's 'treaty', Sharpe and Thomson had added others in the same year: so that altogether the company acquired wide 'concessions' between Lake Nyasa and the borders of the Congo Free State. Alas for the Company, it failed by a narrow margin of time to secure the whole Katanga, for Belgian agents got there first: together with the Copperbelt that was later uncovered in these Northern Rhodesian concessions, the Katanga forms one of the richest mineral-bearing regions of Africa. Copper is there in great girths of ore; later on the Belgians discovered uranium, and later still, after 1945, this uranium was sold to the United States at profits which have still to be revealed but were certainly not small.

Though they failed to get the Katanga, Rhodes's agents had done well enough. They had got the region that was later to be called the Copperbelt; and it was the Copperbelt that became, and remains today, the most important mining centre in British Africa—always excepting, of course, the Witwatersrand.

In 1951 they were digging out copper twenty-four hours a day. There was no limit, it seemed, to the quantity of copper that Britain and the United States could use; nor any limit, apparently, to the price that copper would fetch. It was fetching, by the middle of the year, over £200 a ton; and the price notched upward week by week. Bonus share issues were the order of the day.⁸ Rhokana Cor. ration recommended a final bonus which would bring the total for 1951 to 200 per cent, compared with 120 per cent in 1950; 'Anglo-American' in 1951 was to pay 55 per cent. These companies are partly British-owned, partly American.

Take a pencil and point it at the middle point of Africa. Do you imagine a desert: a benighted solitude: a place of sorcery and savage isolation?

Sharpe and Thomson, Lochner and the others, imagined it thus; though it is difficult, looking back, to decide whether the visitors or the visited were the more savage and benighted.

Yet coming near this middle point it will not be tom-toms beating in

the night that you will hear, nor savage Africans dancing in the flames of sacrificial fires that you will see. Not a bit of it. Tucked away against the border of the Belgian Congo, the Copperbelt has towns that are rich, florid, crammed with material prosperity. White wages here are higher than anywhere else in Africa; while from across the border come wild and naughty tales of the luxury of Elizabethville—‘real continental’, as one enthusiastic lady put it to me—where the Belgians have installed in plenty some of the more exotic forms of Latin culture. There, in Elizabethville, they are said to have Buicks and bioscopes galore, night clubs with naked ladies, diamonds, uranium, gold on the pavements. In the towns of the Copperbelt they speak of Elizabethville in the tones of husky half-ashamed longing that Englishmen sometimes use of Paris.

No doubt they exaggerate. But not in the essence of the matter. For the gods of white civilization here are the gods of high living: and with white miners’ wages at anything from £100 to £300 a month, and managers’ salaries at the level of the stars, these gods are tall indeed.

Above ground and by day, copper mines are unimpressive. But by night they are unforgettable; and that is the time to see them. By night the lifthead gear of the Mindola shaft, at Nkanā, stands up from the level ground like a black shadow against the stars, a shadow that is lit brilliantly within itself so that it glows and grins like a luminous death’s head on top of a totem pole. Coming close beneath it, you are deafened by the hurl and hammer of the ore that is struck and tumbled from one level to another; and above you one great sloping girder climbs into the night sky, pointing straight and clean at the crooked stars of the Southern Cross.

In the wheelhouse wide flywheels spin; cables snake and slither through the roof. Beside the lift-gates there is a single white miner, metal helmet thrust to the back of his head, his finger ready on a row of signal bells; above the clatter of the ore the ring of bells comes up slim and distant. African miners drowse in a row beside the lift, waiting to go down: they are wearing khaki shorts and shirts, and heavy boots with shin-guards, and metal helmets on their heads. Miners’ lamps are belted round their waists. Many metal stairways overhead the ore

tumbles into crusher after crusher, fining at last almost to a powder; and the powder runs into tanks covered with the lizard-green scum of emergent copper, while down below the smelters and the anodes sizzle and glow: and all this, the men and the machinery and the puffing cloud of dust, is lit by shaded searchlights under the pallid African night.

There is no *apartheid* in the lift: we all go down together. They are working the mine at several levels, for the 'ore body' slopes away from near the surface at an angle of about sixty degrees, a great thick tube of solid ore some fifty or sixty feet in diameter, easy to get and to handle. They do not know how far below the surface this 'ore body' may penetrate; or, if they do know, they are not saying. All they are saying is that it seems to slope away for many potential levels below the deepest they are now working.

When compared with the much more difficult mines of the Rand, that is not deep. At 2,800 feet we dismount from the lift and walk along the runway of the deepest 'development level'. Here they are not yet getting out the copper: they are still boring their main runway—about as broad and high as the London Tube—through rock that will take them beneath the slope of the ore. Having gone as far as that, they will bore lesser tunnels into the ore itself, and then, by a method which it takes a miner to describe, they will arrange matters so that the whole 'ore body', at this level, can be blasted out and dropped into 'grizzlies' which deliver the ore, once more by gravitation, to the hoists.

The noise in this new development level is stupendous. They are working here like all the devils in hell. As you walk along the cool dark tunnel you see a blur of light at the end, and the figures of men leaping and swaying in the light. Four pneumatic drills are bashing charge-holes into the rock, two drills on the floor of the tunnel and two drills on a platform above them. Mr. Baird, the white miner in charge, has ten 'boys' to help him. He stops the drilling for a moment, and there is deafening silence.

Mr. Baird directs the work on this level according to instructions from the surveyors and other technical staff. The African miners drill the holes, cart away the rock, insert the blasting charges, and touch them off when Mr. Baird says they should. The month before, one of

IN BRITISH TERRITORY

Mr. Baird's colleagues was able to earn £300 for his month's work; and it is probably fair to say that men with Mr. Baird's qualifications can usually reckon to earn £200 a month. The ten African miners would be earning about £5 a month, though a few fortunate exceptions among them will be earning up to £15 a month. No matter what skills they may acquire, African miners are not allowed to qualify for jobs which are reserved for white miners. Here, three thousand feet beneath the soil of Northern Rhodesia, the industrial colour bar is just as rigid as it is elsewhere.

In its basic pattern, then, white development of Northern Rhodesia has differed not at all from precedents further south. The charter of the British South Africa Company may have expired in 1924 and given way to protectorate government by Whitehall: in all essentials the British Government has adopted the same principles as the Company. The Company's main principle was to conserve this great territory—into which they came by invitation and not by conquest—but not to develop it beyond the needs of ore extraction. Since 1924 the British Administration has done little more than maintain this familiar system: the Company has continued to draw substantial royalties from copper, and will do so for another thirty-five years according to the latest agreement between itself and Government.

You meet, accordingly, with the same social assumptions as further south. Social colour bars, indeed, are in certain respects more rigid here than in South Africa. In Johannesburg Africans and whites may buy at the same counter. But in the towns of Northern Rhodesia the Africans are usually served through little port-holes in the walls of shops; and this is true even of post offices, which are run by an administration that is officially averse from any distinctions of colour. In vain may the British Government 'think it necessary to make it quite clear [to the House of Commons] that the Colonial Office and the Government do not stand for the colour bar either in this country or in any of the Colonies'⁸⁵: the needs of cheap labour, in Northern Rhodesia just as much as elsewhere (and in certain respects, as I say, more than elsewhere) are stronger than platonic declarations.

In their attitude to the Africans the white settlers of Northern Rhodesia cannot be said to differ in any essential way from their fellows in Southern Rhodesia or South Africa. Ever since 1924, when the British Government took over responsibility for 'protecting' Northern Rhodesia, the settlers and the Government have engaged themselves in a running fight for domination of the country. The Government, after all, was pledged to maintain the paramountcy of interest of the African inhabitants: it was only on this understanding that Lewanika and other chiefs had signed their famous 'treaties'. But the trickle of white settlers who came over the Zambezi after 1890 were mostly determined to make this country their own. Their root assumption was accurately described by one of the first of their number, the late Sir Leopold Moore, who settled in Livingstone around the turn of the century. 'If the Territory,' said Mr. Moore, as he then was, in 1930, 'is to be developed by white men so that in twenty years or so natives may dominate our councils and control our affairs, we are simply not going on with it.'⁸⁶ They had come to Northern Rhodesia to make their own fortunes, not the Africans'.

This ambivalence in white policy has dogged all legislation in Northern Rhodesia. If the British Government has generally acquiesced *in practice* with the demands of the settlers, and failed to object when the settlers imposed the same 'way of life' as others imposed elsewhere, it has nevertheless denied the principle of white supremacy.

Hence important differences distinguish Northern from Southern Rhodesia. These can be briefly summarized under two heads: first, the land has not been opened, in practice, to white settlement; secondly, the Africans have not been denied, in principle, the right to social and political development.

Crown land, where alone whites may settle in Northern Rhodesia, measured in 1951 no more than 16,610 square miles out of 287,640 square miles for the whole country. The rest is open to African settlement, at least in theory, though some of it (from tsetse fly and other natural causes) is not at present fit for any human habitation. In Southern Rhodesia, as we have seen, the Africans have only about a third of the country for settlement, while in South Africa they have much less

than a third. Density of population in African areas of Southern Rhodesia is about 38 a square mile (compared with 82 in South Africa); in Northern Rhodesia, with an African population only slightly smaller, it is less than seven a square mile.

There are several specific and important differences in social development between the two Rhodesias. Africans in Northern Rhodesia have acquired rights and privileges which the white settlers, if left to themselves, would certainly have denied them. In every case where African pressure has extracted such rights and privileges from Government, the bulk of white settlers have complained that Government was 'going too fast with the Africans'. In spite of this, the influence of more liberal institutions on the mentality of white settlers is clear enough in Northern Rhodesia: even when settlers grumble and most bitterly complain at Whitehall's 'pampering of the African', they seldom display the callous indifference that you will find further south. Though they may never confess it, the relative liberalism of Protectorate Government has moulded their attitude and made them less unready to admit the possibility of African development. There is a marked difference between the true Northern Rhodesian settler and the new immigrant, especially the new immigrant from South Africa.

These specific differences between Northern and Southern Rhodesia narrow down, essentially, to four that are important.

In 1945 the Protectorate Government invited Mr. W. K. H. Campbell, C.M.G., to turn his great experience in promoting peasant co-operation to the needs of Northern Rhodesia. His report was optimistic on the prospects for co-operation, but suggested that the white settlers, as a whole, were not. He was told on his arrival that Sir John Maybin, another expert, had expressed the view that 'co-operation was no good for Northern Rhodesia'. After all, there was no African co-operation in Southern Rhodesia, nor had the Government of Southern Rhodesia ever shown itself eager to promote any.

But Mr. Campbell, who evidently knew his settlers, prudently turned up Sir John Maybin's minute on the subject. And what Sir John had really said was something rather different. 'If Government is to take a hand in fostering co-operation,' he had written, 'it must do so whole-

heartedly'; and he suggested not that co-operation was 'no good', but that it should be postponed until money and more information were made available. 'Suggestions that co-operation should be systematically fostered in a country where the bulk of the population are at a relatively backward stage of education and development,' commented Mr. Campbell, 'are nearly always greeted with incredulity and ridicule.'⁸⁷ It was evidently no different among the settlers of Northern Rhodesia.

A number of African producer co-operatives were started in 1948, following Mr. Campbell's recommendations. A department for their supervision was created at Lusaka, the administrative capital, and a full-time registrar appointed. In the short time since then, these co-operatives have gained widespread support from African peasants. Many now exist in different parts of the territory: one or two of them are going ahead so fast that they are able to employ European book-keepers to guide and train their own staffs. Nowhere else in central and southern Africa—Nyasaland perhaps apart—are white men in African employment, but the experiment, shocking to orthodox settler sentiment, appears to be working well. As the only effective means of limiting the profits of white traders, some of these producer co-operatives were beginning in 1951 to develop the much more complex process of consumer co-operation, and were selling plough-shares and agricultural equipment to their members. They were hoping for advice from abroad, and especially from the British co-operative movement. In Southern Rhodesia, meanwhile, there was no sign or symptom of any willingness by Government to promote agricultural co-operation.

That is one difference which counts for much in the struggle of the Africans to enter the modern world on their own feet.

The second difference is perhaps still more valuable to them. This is the rapid development of African trade unions in Northern Rhodesia. As with peasant co-operation, the industrial organization of African workers had to be imposed by Whitehall on a white community which resisted it as sturdily as any in South Africa or Southern Rhodesia. Nor would Whitehall have imposed it, clearly enough, if the African workers had themselves not made this the price of industrial peace.

In March 1940, when the war had given Rhodesian copper a new importance, white mineworkers on the two mines at Nkana and Mufulira struck for higher pay and better conditions. After Government conciliation, the strikers secured most of their demands, and the rest were submitted to arbitration. One day after agreement had been reached the African mineworkers at the same two mines, numbering about 15,000, followed the example of their white supervisors and went on strike. Five days later a crowd of several thousand African strikers at Nkana tried to prevent a queue of 150 men, who had remained at work, from drawing their pay. Police and troops intervened; tear-gas bombs were thrown, but the crowd, much angered, retaliated by an attack on the compound office, where the Europeans had taken shelter. The troops who were present opened fire, killing 17 Africans and wounding 65. No further disturbances followed, and the men returned to work.⁸⁸ But the warning was clear enough.

Not long after this, Government decided to encourage the development of a primitive form of industrial organization among African mineworkers and the Companies, presumably for the sake of peace in a time of war when they were selling every ounce of copper they could offer, were got to agree. A beginning was made with committees of 'tribal representatives'—delegates of tribal groups among the workers on the mines. The more skilled African workers were allowed to form 'boss-boys' committees'.

This was little more than temporizing. It became obvious that African workers were determined to have their own trade unions. A clause had been inserted in the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 that grants-in-aid would not go to dependencies unless their laws gave African trade union facilities to exist and to be recognized; and this undoubtedly helped. Influential voices in the white community gradually swung round to the view that African unions were advisable or at least inevitable. By 1946 both Mr. Roy Welensky and Mr. Brian Goodwin, both of them at that time influential trade unionists and Unofficial Members of the Legislative Council (from which Mr. Goodwin later resigned) were advocating the establishment of African unions. Mr. Welensky, by trade an engine-driver from Salisbury in

Southern Rhodesia and an energetic and successful politician, relented of his earlier opposition, it seems, after 'the capable organization of a strike by African employees of the railways in October 1945, and the agreement on hours and wages negotiated by the African Milling Employees Union at Bulawayo'.⁸⁹ Mr. Goodwin, an influential leader of the white mineworkers, held that 'no matter what the legislation is, if the African wants a trade union . . . he will form it. You cannot stop a mass movement.'

Government then brought out from England an experienced official of the Transport and General Workers' Union, Mr. W. M. Comrie, to advise Africans on the formation of trade unions. Unlike some other 'Trade Union Labour Officers' sent into the colonies by the Labour Government, Mr. Comrie waited for no second invitation. In 1949 the 'boss-boys' committees' at the four mines on the Copperbelt formed themselves into four trade unions; Broken Hill mine followed suit a year later; these five unions then merged into the Northern Rhodesian African Mineworkers Union; and this union, by 1951, had recruited over 25,000 paid-up members, or the great bulk of all African workers on the mines, both underground and on the surface. Most of these members had signed 'stop-orders' so that their dues should be deducted automatically from their pay. In 1951 these dues, at one shilling a month each, were providing the union with a reasonably substantial revenue.

In point of time, the African Shop Assistants Union had been first in the field. This and the Mineworkers Union were followed quickly by the African Railway Workers Union, the African Teachers Union, the African Drivers Union, the African General Workers Union, and the African Hotel and Catering Workers Union. In 1951 these seven unions, with a total membership of 30,000 to 35,000, formed themselves into a Trades Union Congress. The African Mineworkers Union, in the same year, applied for affiliation to the Miners' International, of which Sir William Lawther, of the British National Union of Mineworkers, was at that time secretary; the rule forbidding two miners' organizations in any one country from affiliating to the International was altered on the initiative of the British miners, and the African

affiliation was accepted. Late in 1951 the President and General Secretary of the African Mineworkers, Mr. Lawrence Katilungu and Mr. Simon Kaluwa, visited the British coalfields at the invitation of the National Union of Mineworkers. In two short years the African mineworkers had not only created their own organization, but had forged links with miners in other countries.

The African mineworkers had done a great deal more than this. They had forced up the average level of their wages by 75 per cent through vigorous collective bargaining with the copper companies, had shown themselves able to act unitedly, and were pressing other demands that should bring their status nearer to that of their white colleagues in the mines. They had proved their ability, both to recruit and organize 'raw village labour' that was new to the mines—and for whom the very words 'trade union' must have been immeasurably meaningless—and to do this in a manner which seemed to give real meaning to the obligations and advantages of membership. They had won the admiration of grudging white negotiators. They had made nonsense of the white contention, common all over Africa, that 'the Africans are not ready for trade unions yet'. 'Throughout the preliminary and conciliation proceedings,' says the Report for 1949 of the Labour and Mines Department at Lusaka, in reference to wages bargaining in that year, 'the African union officials conducted themselves in a responsible manner, showing high negotiating qualities, which earned them the compliments of the general managers and the conciliator.' Later experience was to confirm this favourable judgment.

By 1951, moreover, African mineworkers had shown themselves capable of running their own affairs without the stupidity and speculation with which, it was said, they were bound to become involved. (And kindly white commentators who were saying that African trade unions could not be made to work, since the officials would always 'take off' with the funds, had apparently forgotten what teething troubles the earlier British unions had suffered.) Their annual conference in 1951 found the union with assured funds to permit the full-time employment of branch secretaries at £10 a month, with annual increments of ten shillings; the central office was able to buy a new Ford truck for the

NORTHERN RHODESIA

purposes of the union; and educational ventures were being planned. Other African unions, meanwhile, were spreading across the Territory, and branches were springing up at places as far distant as Livingstone on the Zambezi and Fort Jameson on the frontiers of Nyasaland.

But in Southern Rhodesia, as we have seen, no Africans are legally entitled to take part in collective bargaining, since the law does not recognize them as 'employees'; and although they may try to function as trade unionists, their task is hazardous and difficult.

A third important difference—and, once again, one that matters much to Africans who are trying to climb the barriers which divide them from the modern world—resides in the contrasted attitude to Africans in the urban areas of the two Rhodesias. In Southern Rhodesia the African is enabled to acquire no security of tenure outside his rural reserve. In Northern Rhodesia, on the contrary, 'there is no Land Apportionment Act and nothing in law to prevent the African from occupying township plots anywhere in the towns for residence or buildings on the same terms as the European'.⁹⁰ The practice, as usual, is not as good as the principle, for in practice there is probably as much social and residential segregation in Northern Rhodesia as there is in Southern Rhodesia. But the principle, at a time of intensive industrialization and growing African consciousness in the political field, has undeniable value.

Here it is right to say a good word for the copper-mining companies. They have rejected the barbarous and wasteful habits of the Rand employers in preventing workers from living with their families, and, by civilized contrast, have built large village compounds of 'tied cottages' where the miner may reside with his family for as long as his employment lasts. Some of the newer housing in these village compounds is as good as any I have seen for African industrial workers anywhere, though it may still leave much to be desired. So well is this family living liked by the workers, the companies say, that they have not needed to go in search of mining labour for many years past. According to one observer, writing ten years ago, 'well over 50 per cent of the labour on the copper belt is now temporarily urbanized'⁹¹—will remain in towns,

that is, for the greater part of working life. A much smaller, but growing, percentage is *permanently* urbanized; with the growth of non-mining industry, this permanently urbanized African population will become steadily larger. Although their conditions are far from ideal—and much African housing in these towns seems to have been built on the assumption that Africans do not have children—these permanently urbanized African workers have a better chance of adjustment to modern conditions than Africans anywhere else to the south of the equator.

In Northern Rhodesia, accordingly, the whites have had to concede to the African the right to establish himself as an urban worker who may legally organize for his own industrial defence. Alone of all these British territories of mixed population, Northern Rhodesia affords the African worker a chance—although so far it is little more than that—of defending himself from the worst forms of exploitation to which industrialism under present conditions will otherwise subject him.

The whites have also had to concede—a fourth point of major difference from Southern Rhodesia—the right of political representation by Africans. Constitutional changes in 1948 gave way to African pressure in permitting the Northern Rhodesian African Representation Council to elect two Africans to membership of the Legislative Council. In reality, once again, this was less than it seemed on paper, for the method of election was by way of carefully ‘non-political’ African advisory councils. But by this time a group of politically minded Africans had formed the Northern Rhodesian African Congress; and it was becoming clear that the nationalism of this Congress would inspire and influence almost any African, no matter how ‘respectable’, who might be elected from the Representation Council. In 1951, after a brief four years of life, the Congress had strong but few roots. Yet the drift of African opinion was all towards reinforcing it. The trade unions, for example, had as yet made no use of their right—enshrined in their constitution, and approved by Government—to set aside funds for political purposes; but their leaders were ardent members of the Congress, and regarded the Congress as ‘their movement’. It could be expected that

NORTHERN RHODESIA

the Congress would with time develop the attributes of a national and nationalist party striving for the rights of a subject people. By 1952, already, the Congress had shown that it could no longer be dismissed as a 'bunch of intellectuals and malcontents'. For the expenses of the delegation which it helped to send to London at the time of the second conference on federation in April 1952, it collected several thousand pounds; and mainly in the rural areas.

These four points are perhaps enough to show that the Africans in Northern Rhodesia knew well what they were doing when, in 1951, they refused with vehement unanimity to consent to federation with Southern Rhodesia. Until they can carry their political and social development to a higher level, they prefer the relatively benevolent shelter of imperial government. And this development is going ahead with speed and determination. When the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. James Griffiths, visited Nyasaland in 1951 he witnessed in the Protectorate something like the emergence of a nation. For the first time in history, chiefs and tribal representatives came together from all parts of Nyasaland and spoke with one voice on the future of their country. They, like the Northern Rhodesian Africans, rejected federation with unanimity. If anything, they were more vehement and determined than the Northern Rhodesians: in both Territories, moreover, the hand-picked advisory councils spoke with the same voice as the two African Congresses, a very significant development.

No doubt there are other points of difference between the territories to the north and south of the Zambezi, just as there are other points of similarity. Psychologically, there is a wide gulf between the self-confident awareness of their opportunities that you begin to find among Africans in Northern Rhodesia (and, apparently, in Nyasaland), and the mute frustration that seems so common among Africans in Southern Rhodesia. But in terms of the African struggle to enter the modern world on their own feet, these points of solid difference I have mentioned are probably the most important.

Thus it would still be possible, in theory, for the white settlers of Northern Rhodesia, having acquired self-government, to reverse the trend of African emancipation. But in practice, even if they were to

acquire self-government, the time for such a reversal is almost certainly too late. White immigrants may be coming into the territory at the rate of about eight thousand a year; the number of whites may be more today than the number in Southern Rhodesia when Southern Rhodesia acquired self-government. Even so, history has moved too far and too fast: the Africans of Northern Rhodesia (and this is possibly truer still of Nyasaland) are in an incomparably better position to defend themselves than were the luckless Matabele and Mashona thirty years ago, when the Southern Rhodesian settlers acquired their 'freedom from White-hall'. The settlers of Northern Rhodesia know this well. That is why they have pressed with new and desperate energy for federation with Southern Rhodesia, hoping by this means to reinforce their numbers to the point where they can drag back the heavy arms of history's clock.

'CENTRAL AFRICAN FEDERATION'

TAKING their inheritance of white supremacy for granted, the settlers of Northern Rhodesia occupy a position that is not without its tragic side. They came in here and 'roughed it': they 'opened up the country': for years they suffered hardship and hazard. After many generations, they sometimes thought, the Africans might claim their share in civilization. But the problem was far ahead, so far ahead that it scarcely needed thinking of. Even the few settlers whose mental scope was big enough to see the problem, saw it as one that their great-grandchildren might be left to deal with. Meanwhile, this was 'white man's country' no matter what the cranks and cowards in Whitehall might think or say. . . .

Of late years this easy self-confidence has notably dwindled. 'Some time ago,' said Mr. Roy Welensky as far back as 1946 (and that is a long time in a country as new as Northern Rhodesia), 'I felt there was a solution in the argument often advocated that the European of superior education should keep ahead of the African—in other words, we would not have Europeans as hewers of wood and drawers of water in Northern Rhodesia; and on account of superior ability we would keep one jump ahead of native progress. For a time I was prepared to accept that, though I doubt now where there is anything in it except as a short-term policy. If the only distinction between the African and ourselves is this question of education, and far more capable people than myself suggest it is, then it is a difference that will disappear, and if it disappears then the African gradually takes over. . . . The African takes over post after post from Europeans in the country. . . .'⁹²

Now it happens that Roy Welensky, the Napoleon of Broken Hill, is among the ablest men that the two Rhodesias have yet produced. He was among the first to see that the Africans, given a chance, were cap-

able of rapid development: that the Africans would soon overtake the Europeans unless the Europeans could continue to be protected by discriminatory law and custom. Believing therefore in the need for such discrimination, Mr. Welensky has led the crusade for Northern Rhodesian self-government, or, failing that, for amalgamation or some other form of close association with Southern Rhodesia.

Even Mr. Welensky, able and even relatively liberal though he is, remains a hundred miles from considering that the Africans can 'safely' or 'profitably' be admitted to equality with the Europeans. Fastened tight within their bonds of prejudice, the white settlers of Northern Rhodesia are as sure as their fellows further south that civilization depends on segregation. When their supremacy is threatened, accordingly, they begin to fear the Africans; and from fear flows hatred. Although race relations north of the Zambezi are kinder and more hopeful than south of it, they move in the same fatal direction.

In 1951 the settlers believed their supremacy could be saved only by joining up with the settlers in Southern Rhodesia. They began to form 'settlers' associations' to agitate for federation, for self-government, for anything that should interrupt the dread machinery of social change. They formed these associations, as an Unofficial Member of Legislative Council put it to me, 'so that we can give the Colonial Office a kick in the pants when the time comes'. They saw in Whitehall—and especially a Whitehall run by Fabians and 'Labour fanatics'—an enduring threat to their very existence. 'The sooner we get rid of the Colonial Office,' said the editor of a Northern Rhodesian newspaper, 'the better for Northern Rhodesia.' They were glad when the Conservative Party took office in Britain in October 1951, believing—as Mr. Welensky said—that 'the Conservatives would be more forthright and would take a more realistic view'.⁹³

The Africans, automatically, clung ever closer to the principle of imperial protection. Superficially, it was a strange situation: for here was imperial government, the begetter of all white exploitation in Africa, damned by settlers and praised by Africans. Had imperialism, with a Labour Government in Britain, changed its spots?

An easy answer would be to trace some fundamental distinction

'CENTRAL AFRICAN FEDERATION'

between Conservative and Labour policies in colonial affairs. In reality, as Mr. Welensky saw, no such fundamental distinction has existed. The differences between Conservative and Labour policy have been differences of interpretation rather than of principle: it is far from easy to know how far even the interpretation has really differed. In general, the colonial policy of each party has tended to practice continuity with the other: which is not to say, of course, that the aspirations and beliefs of these two political groupings have not greatly differed.

It is true, for example, that Lord Passfield's memorable declaration on Native Policy in East Africa, made in 1930, carried with it the belief among Labour supporters that imperialism was dead, or should be dead. In fact Lord Passfield's declaration enunciated nothing new. It merely extended to all East African territories—and by implication to all British colonial territories—the Conservative statement on Kenya of 1923 that 'the interests of the African natives must be paramount, and that if, and when, those interests and the interests of the immigrant races should conflict, the former should prevail'. This was old doctrine, rooted in the 'treaties of protection' which Rhodes's agents and other agents had signed with African chiefs, and in attitudes still older. And it was precisely a Labour Colonial Secretary, Mr. Griffiths, who was later to preside over the interment of this doctrine in the case of Central Africa. What the Northern Rhodesian Africans—though outnumbering their white settlers by more than thirty to one—were being asked to accept in 1951 was no longer 'paramountcy of the majority', but 'partnership', which was evidently intended to mean something quite different. For 'partnership' interpreted as equality would mean infallibly the paramountcy of Africans. 'partnership', apparently, was to mean inequality. It was to mean white supremacy under a new name.

A Conservative Government might have delayed the formation of African trade unions in Northern Rhodesia, might have listened more sympathetically to the complaints and claims of white settlers. Yet once again it is hard to say that the difference would be one of principle. African political representation was given to Northern Rhodesia under a Labour Government; but this political representation was still only half-baked, and in any case was the logical consequence of political

reforms introduced in 1938 (establishment of African Urban Advisory Councils) and 1943 (establishment of African Regional Advisory Councils). The most that can be said is that Labour Government has obstructed less severely the processes of political change. On the processes of economic change, specifically Labour policy has had nothing of importance to say.

There has been not enough difference between the two policies, in any case, to explain the apparently inconsistent position of imperial government in British Central Africa. The reason why settlers demand self-government, and Africans cling to imperial protection both under Labour and Conservative Governments in London, must be sought elsewhere.

In answering this question, one is confronted once again with the central and tremendous fact of African emergence. Only a few years ago it was possible to discuss these issues on the assumption that the Africans would one day, perhaps far into the future, claim their right to independence and all that independence meant. Today it is otherwise: today, all over Africa, Africans are eagerly discussing this claim for themselves. And not only in British Africa. The Africans of French Africa are immersed in the same discussion: their biggest independence movement had established common ties throughout all French African territories as early as 1946. For British Africa the universal suffrage granted to the Gold Coast in 1950, and the later election of African Ministers, had a profound effect. All too clearly, the old assumptions of colonialism are being swept away: it is not in generations that the Africans will now approach maturity, but in the few short years that lie ahead. The battle for Africa is joined.

Imperial government faces an acute dilemma. If the old colonial assumptions are being swept away, what new assumptions can take their place? Two 'factors of change' appear to govern the choice.

The first of these factors is a change in the nature of imperialism itself. Traditionally, the British have had three objectives in colonizing Africa: to export goods and capital, to gain access to new and cheap supplies of raw material, and to strengthen their military position by

'CENTRAL AFRICAN FEDERATION'

occupying certain territories or denying such occupation to rival Powers. They were interested, to repeat the pregnant slogan that Rhodes used, in 'land, not niggers'—though they soon discovered that they would need cheap labour as well. They were seldom interested in settling British people in these new territories as a principal object of policy: if anything, settlers were a nuisance, given to making trouble with the natives, demanding imperial aid and comfort, and incurring liabilities that London must reluctantly meet. Thus the settlers in the Cape Colony, established merely to provide a refreshment station on the route to India, had been always a nuisance to the Dutch Government, and continued for many decades to be a nuisance to the British Government which followed the Dutch. They had to be subsidized: sometimes they had to be protected. It was only much later that the British began to use some of them as a means to another end.

Imperialism may mean many things. But infallibly it will mean the export of metropolitan capital. Settlers in due course become wealthy enough to have capital of their own. They aspire then to a greater measure of autonomy from the mother-country; and the whole tradition of British imperialism has been to give them such autonomy while holding fast to the imperial connexion. Such was the sequence in Southern Rhodesia. Imperial Government was interested in Southern Rhodesia not as an area of settlement but for reasons that were strategic and economic. For thirty years it remained content that the British South Africa Company should administer the territory; and cared not a whit—beyond the needs of mining labour—whether settlers went there or not. Yet as soon as these settlers became numerous and wealthy enough to want self-government, Whitehall was ready to give it them but remained indifferent whether they governed themselves or became a province of the Union of South Africa. In the event the settlers voted by 8,774 against 5,998 to become a self-governing Crown Colony instead of joining the Union: for the imperial connexion it was all the same.

For thirty years, equally, imperial government was content to allow the British South Africa Company to administer Northern Rhodesia, caring not at all what happened there so long as the Company were

satisfied. During many of those years the settlers in the Territory found themselves 'up against' the indifference of the Company just as much as they were later to be 'up against' Whitehall. Even after Whitehall took over from the Company, imperial government had little interest in the settlers. For years between the wars these settlers of Northern Rhodesia battered in vain on the doors of government offices. Finally, a Royal Commission under Lord Bledisloe was appointed. It reported in 1939 against amalgamation of the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland: the 'avowed (Southern Rhodesian) policy of segregation, under the name of "Parallel Development", and the institution of a colour bar clearly stood in the way'. This Commission also noted the 'striking unanimity' of native opposition to amalgamation.

In 1951, by contrast, imperial government looked with favour on proposals for federation of the three territories. Federation was not amalgamation; and the proposals now put forward did contain certain safeguards which were designed, at any rate on paper, to meet African objections. Yet there were few who really doubted that federation would mark a decisive step towards the official and legal enthronement of white supremacy in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. For this, after all, was admittedly the reason why the Northern Rhodesian settlers wanted federation. They had nothing else to gain from it: thanks to copper profits, they were wealthier than their friends south of the Zambezi, and any economic advantages that might flow from federation would be rather for the South than for the North. If African opposition was to prevent Northern Rhodesian settlers from securing self-government, then they were evidently willing to take federation as the next best thing.

Understanding this, the Africans rejected federation. The proposed safeguards, they said with one voice, were worthless. What had become of the 'safeguards' which Whitehall had written into the Southern Rhodesian constitution? Whitehall's veto had never once been used. Moreover, as the unimpeachable Lord Lugard had said at the time, this veto was in practice useless. 'Such a reservation,' he wrote in *The Dual Mandate*, 'has in practice proved unenforceable in face of a unanimous hostile vote, for if all the Ministers resign, there is no alternative means

‘CENTRAL AFRICAN FEDERATION’

of carrying on the Government, as there would be if similar action were taken by an unofficial majority in a Crown Colony. . . .’ London cannot use its veto, that is, in self-governing colonies such as Southern Rhodesia, since London possesses there no *executive* authority: nor would it possess any in the proposed Central African Federation. ‘To assume, therefore,’ concluded Lugard, ‘that fundamental issues such as forced labour or land alienation can be safeguarded by reservations in the constitution is useless, since there is no power to enforce them.’

But now came the drama of it. For imperial government, not withstanding this unanimous and well-founded African rejection, now felt itself able to accept the ‘principle of federation’. Clearly enough, imperial policy was changing.

It was changing, no doubt, partly because the Northern Rhodesian settlers were wealthy and numerous enough by this time to argue potently for an improvement in their status. There were over 40,000 of them by this time: and they were still living in a territory ‘protected’ officially on behalf of the Africans. They wanted, understandably enough, to secure their future. If they could not simply be given self-government, as the Southern Rhodesian settlers had been given it, then at least they must be assured that ‘the country wouldn’t be handed over to the natives’. They were gratified to note that the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Griffiths, talked not of ‘Native paramountcy’ as his predecessors had talked, but of ‘European and African partnership’. They were still more gratified in October 1951, when Mr. Churchill gave the Colonial Office to Mr. Oliver Lyttelton, an important City man who had had interests in colonial minerals and who they thought, rightly or wrongly, would give them a more sympathetic hearing than Mr. Griffiths had.

That Conservative Government in Whitehall would mean, if not a change in principle, at least a change in emphasis was suggested by the Conservative Party’s active interest in Central African federation. While Labour Members pressed the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Griffiths, to take full account of African opinion, Conservative Members pressed eagerly forward in support of the settlers’ claims. Thus Mr. Dodds-Parker, Conservative Member for Banbury, asked Mr. Griffiths in a supplementary question in the House of Commons on November 8,

1950, whether the Minister was aware that 'there is great concern in this part of the world that at last we shall get results out of this meeting [at the Victoria Falls]?' Labour Members were certainly disinterested in their support for African opinions. Could the same be said for the Conservatives? Some of them, after all, had served on the Empire Producers' Board and on the Joint East and Central Africa Board: or had been directors of companies such as the British Central Africa Company, which owned 300,000 acres of land, mining rights, and so forth, held shares in Nyasaland Railways, and owned Nyasaland Sisal Estates Ltd.

Imperial policy was changing because the economic status of these territories was changing. Secondary industry had begun to offer new openings for British and other capital. At Lusaka, the administrative capital of Northern Rhodesia, 149 out of 150 factory sites lately offered for sale were taken up almost at once. During the first three months of 1951 twenty-five new companies were registered in Northern Rhodesia with a capital of £738,000: in the same period a year earlier seventeen new companies had been registered with a capital of £219,000. In Southern Rhodesia, the principal of the proposed federal partners, the record was still more imposing. Four hundred and fifty new companies, with a capital of £9,136,005, had been registered in 1949: in 1950 the same figures were 492 companies with a capital of £17,489,137. Small wonder that many settlers should see federation of the three territories as the step towards a British Dominion of Central Africa. Imperialism might yet achieve another lease of life.

These, apparently, were decisive arguments for a change in imperial policy. The settlers of Central Africa were no longer an importunate embarrassment: they had now become worthy links in the chain of empire. But alongside this there was a second and equally potent 'factor of change'. And this was the growth of African nationalism.

So long as Africans in Central Africa were content merely to defend their status as 'protected' persons, imperial government need worry little about eventual conflicts of sovereignty. But once Africans began to demand a real advance towards equality of political and social status with white settlers, imperial indifference ceased to be possible. And if

‘CENTRAL AFRICAN FEDERATION’

this demand should come at the same time—and partly in consequence of it—as white pressure for self-government, then imperial government could not avoid a choice between the two. Was it to take the principle of trusteeship of backward peoples *au pied de la lettre*—and step by step deny white claims to supremacy in these territories? Or was it to turn its back on trusteeship—and reconcile continued white supremacy with the bare appearance of African advance?

The dilemma was acute. To over-ride African aspirations in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, as the aspirations of the Matabele and Mashona had been over-ridden in Southern Rhodesia, was not only to break many solemn promises. It was to court an ever-sharpening racial struggle at a time and place where imperial interests demanded that such a struggle should be averted or made as small as possible. Yet to grant these aspirations, even cautious stage by stage, would be fatal to the survival of white supremacy, and sooner or later fatal also to the imperial connexion. Even to risk severing the imperial connexion at a time when imperial government was trying by all means possible to shore up its possessions against the strains of international conflict—and with copper at £200 a ton!—seemed intolerable. Imperial government, driven to this unwelcome choice, chose according to its nature. It prepared to shift its ground. It accepted the ‘principle of federation’. It opted for the settlers against the Africans.

In 1951 this choice was little more than implied. There was little more than the suggestion—though the new Colonial Secretary, Mr. Lyttelton, was quick to make it—that a ‘strong British base in Central Africa’ was needed if the flood of nationalism flowing in from West Africa—and the other flood that turmoiled in South Africa and threatened to throw itself northwards—were to be contained. But the direction of the imperial choice could not be seriously in doubt. After the Victoria Falls conference on federation, in September, officials in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland opened a veritable campaign to persuade African leaders to co-operate in defining ‘partnership’. Once the Africans could be entangled in discussions about ‘partnership’—a status that did not mean, and in the circumstances could not mean, equality—their opposition to federation could probably be turned.

IN BRITISH TERRITORY

But the difficulties were only now beginning. For the Africans of the two Protectorates (the opinion of Africans in Southern Rhodesia, though hostile to federation, seems not to have had much further consideration) had had enough experience by now of the ways of their white 'protectors' to cock a watchful eye at anything they were asked to sign. They refused to become entangled in discussions on 'partnership' that were clearly intended to prolong white supremacy in a slightly different form.

'We know,' the delegates of the Nyasaland African Congress had told Mr. Griffiths when he met them at Lilongwe in August, 'what the European settlers under the leadership of Southern Rhodesia want.' These settlers, said Congress, wanted Dominion status. They wanted 'to forestall the development of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia as Black States and impose upon them the Southern Rhodesian policy of white supremacy'. They wanted Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia 'to become white men's countries, just as South Africa and Southern Rhodesia are white men's countries, where Africans enjoy practically no political and economic rights and are generally treated as social outcasts.' They wanted 'to take our land because on the pretext of economic development the federal government would allow an influx of Europeans into our country'. They wanted 'to debar all Africans in Central Africa from any effective political rights': and 'to get rid of Colonial Office rule in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia in order to extend to these two territories the reactionary Native Policy of Southern Rhodesia'.

When these Africans saw that in spite of all their arguments the British Government was determined to accept the principle of federation, they prepared themselves for pressure that they knew was coming. 'I feel,' wrote one Northern Rhodesian nationalist in a letter during October, 'that the next move [by Government] will be more dangerous than the first, because they are studying our views now and may bring the matter up in a slightly different way.' In Nyasaland, especially, African suspicions quickened almost at once into disillusionment with the imperial government's real intentions. 'One thing is certain . . .' wrote a Nyasaland nationalist leader in another letter during October,

'CENTRAL AFRICAN FEDERATION'

'no one now in Nyasaland believes in the impartiality of the British Government on this question. In fact, even the loyalty which the people once had to the British Government is seriously affected. . . . If Britain forsakes us, you will certainly make it easy for us to accept communism when it knocks at our doors. We shall have no alternative. At least communism knows no colour bars. . . .'

His private letters, he wrote, were being opened by the authorities. 'Well, I do not mind that. Let them open them and put me in prison for opposing federation. Then the whole world will know that when they said they wanted to get the opinion of the Africans they were just being hypocritical. They had already made up their minds. They now know the views of the Africans. And if they were sincere when they said that what they wanted to know was what the Africans thought of the scheme, they should now simply drop the whole affair. But they are not doing so. . . .'

These Africans in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, in short, took note of London's change of front. But they were not to be bound hand-and-foot in a new helotry as the Matabele and Mashona in Southern Rhodesia had been bound. They had set their minds on another destination. They held accordingly to the spirit and the letter of imperial protection as a means of gaining time. Meanwhile they worked at making their organizations more effective, at explaining by innumerable meetings throughout the country what the people must expect, and what the people should demand. Their most articulate aspirations had been put to Mr. Griffiths at Lilongwe on August 28th: what the Nyasaland Congress said on this occasion undoubtedly spoke the mind even of the more cautious men who sat in the Government-sponsored provincial councils. That this was so was shown by the fact that none of the three provincial councils in Nyasaland could be got by government to admit the principle of federation: all steadfastly opposed it, in spite of the fact that many of the men on these councils depended for their livelihood on government employment. Principal demands put forward by Congress on that occasion were:

- (1) the introduction of universal manhood suffrage (as in the Gold Coast);

- (2) the country to be divided into appropriate constituencies and the number of African seats in Legislative Council to be advanced to twelve;
- (3) the district, provincial, and protectorate councils to be transformed into properly elected organs of democratic government;
- (4) Africans to be represented on the existing local government bodies in urban areas on the same principle as non-Africans.

Substantially the same demands were put forward by the Northern Rhodesian African Congress, at that time a less representative body but one which certainly expressed, just as much as the Nyasaland Congress in Nyasaland, what more and more Africans were coming to feel. Towards the end of the year, for instance, the African Representation Council (a notably 'moderate' body) rejected the idea of 'partnership' as the means of making federation acceptable to Africans: in so doing, the Council put itself in line with the views of the much more combative African Congress of Northern Rhodesia. They rejected 'partnership' not because, evidently, they thought co-operation between the races difficult or undesirable—on the contrary, no responsible African body has ever demanded that the white community should quit Rhodesia—but because they saw in it an attempt to trick them out of their rights.

Whether they were chiefs, trade unionists, peasants in co-operatives, or intellectuals, these Africans now wanted substantially the same thing. They wanted, more and more consciously, the snapping of the old bonds of contempt and backwardness. They yearned for a new life and a new world. And they were ready, if need be, to pay a high price to get it. Here, too, the battle for Africa was joined; and, because the settlers had not always had their wishes granted by Whitehall, the hand of the Africans was stronger than elsewhere. While the white communities in both Rhodesias considered what they might do next to gain their ends, African resistance grew more coherent. The way was opened to dramatic possibilities.

The drama was not long in coming. The new Conservative Government in Britain decided to press on with preparations for federation. Under pressure from white settlers, who were alarmed at the rapid

‘CENTRAL AFRICAN FEDERATION’

growth of African opposition, this Government advanced the date of the second conference on federation—to be held in London in 1952—from July to April. To this the Africans replied with a still more energetic campaign against federation. Their Congress in Northern Rhodesia appointed a ‘supreme action council’ which should clear the ground for a ‘national stoppage of work’ if the Government tried to over-ride African opposition. The racial situation deteriorated rapidly, both in the urban areas and in the tribal countryside. One of the few Europeans who had sided with the Africans, a young man called Simon Zukas, was hastily brought to trial on various charges, most of which could not be substantiated, and sentenced to deportation. The old administrative habit of ‘when in doubt, call in the police’ had evidently lost none of its force.

Some measure of the temper of white-settler feeling on the subject could be gained from a comment which appeared in the Northern Rhodesian *Livingstone Mail* on April 4, some days before Zukas was brought before the Chief Justice. ‘I am inclined to think’, wrote ‘Observer’ in the *Livingstone Mail*, ‘that it is a great pity we could not have hired a mobile Gestapo unit to eliminate him (Zukas) without fuss one dark night. He would probably be forgotten inside six months. As it is now, there is always the danger that constitutional action will make a martyr of him in the eyes of his many supporters.’ Could it be wondered that Africans were eager to avoid white-settler government?

Both African Congresses, in Northern Rhodesia and in Nyasaland, sent strong unofficial delegations to London so as to protest authoritatively against federation: officially sponsored Africans who had gone to London with the official white delegations announced, as soon as they arrived, that they would boycott the conference. They would not, they said in a powerful letter to *The Times* on April 29, take part in a conference that ‘was being held to consider modifications to the federation scheme formulated by officials in London in 1951, in which no African had any part, although it affected the interests of more Africans than any other race’. They had ‘no faith in professed safeguards for African interests’, since ‘the constitutions of Union of South Africa and of Southern Rhodesia have proved that they are valueless’. This meant

that the only Africans who attended the conference were two from Southern Rhodesia whom Sir Godfrey Huggins had brought with him as his own nominees: and even these two men said they were against federation.

The aim of this second conference was to modify the original proposals for federation so as to make them 'acceptable' to all concerned: and the interested governments were to pronounce for or against federation, based on these recommendations, later in the same year. But already it was clear that federation in any form, no matter with what paper safeguards, would have to be imposed on the Africans: it was also clear that this process of imposing federation would be neither painless nor easy, and might be impossible.

THE CHOICE BEFORE US

NOBODY likes admitting that he lives upon a volcano. And even people who do admit it, in an effort to be honest with themselves, always imagine how much more easily neighbouring volcanoes may erupt. And so it can happen that a country is conducted to the edge of disaster by a handful of men in authority, without the great mass of people living understood the nearness of their own danger.' These words were written of Algeria in October 1951, and they are apt: yet they fit the circumstances of southern, central, or east Africa no less aptly than they fit those of north Africa.⁹⁴ Wherever the white man in Africa is settled as a native, he lives today upon a volcano in varying stages of dormancy or eruption; and almost nowhere will he admit it of his own case.

A brief survey of British territories to the north of the Union has shown that the poisoning of race relations cannot be blamed upon any one segment of the white population. No doubt the Afrikaans Nationalists of the Union are making the pace towards racial disaster: it was not they who initiated the movement in that direction, and it is not they alone who are involved in it. The structure of white society in the Rhodesias—and we should get much the same answer from a tour of East Africa—is the deciding factor: and that structure is essentially the same in all these territories of permanent white settlement. So long as the white man holds to a system founded on the helotry of the Africans—and this is what 'cheap native labour' really means—he shows himself incapable of good and peaceful government. Until he abandons that system, he will remain in one form or another at war with the Africans. He will remain incapable of realizing more than a small part of the wealth of the continent in which he lives.

But the onus for abandoning this system, and adopting another, lies

not simply or even mainly on the white settlers in these territories. It lies with those who govern in the last resort: with the people of Britain. The material interests of the British elector may be linked less directly to the profits of cheap African labour than the interests of the white settler: the link is none the less sure for all that. We are all, in that sense, imperialists; and it will be the worst sort of hypocrisy to blame others for what we regularly do ourselves.

There is a choice to be made between the narrow interests of imperialism and the wider interests of humanity. The choice was always there, no doubt: but today, with an intensity that was never so in the past, it is fateful, urgent, full of significance for the whole world. What makes it thus is not only the collapse of colonialism in other parts of the world, but also the stage of development which Africa itself has reached.

The full tide of colonialism in Africa, flowing these hundred years, may well have spent its force. In southern and central Africa, as we have seen, the old imperialism at long range has given way or is giving way to a new imperialism at short range. Meanwhile, the growth of non-mining industry in these countries, of 'home-made capitalism', opens at last a way for the Africans to break through the barriers which surround them. That is true. The industrial revolution in southern Africa implies another in the habits and occupations of the Africans. They are caught up in the processes of industry. They become town-dwellers, industrial workers. More and more they are brought physically together with the white population. Taking the African into his factories, the white man takes him necessarily into his towns as well. Little by little, the white man is forced to concede a better life to African industrial workers—skilled and semi-skilled—upon whom he will more and more depend.

Yet in measure with this economic integration, and contradicting it, the white man reacts severely and emotionally towards sharper and more cruel forms of segregation. Industrial development in southern Africa goes hand in hand with the attempt to find new ways of binding the African to pre-industrial conditions of helotry. In South Africa this attempt is called *apartheid*, or racial segregation: in Central Africa it is called 'partnership', or white dominion: in essence it is all the same thing.

The new imperialism means not only 'home-made capitalism' in these territories: it means a renewed drive to find cheap raw materials, new sources of mineral wealth, fresh supplies of food for export from countries which themselves are desperately underfed. The years since the second world war brought overwhelming evidence of this. The 'ground nuts scheme' in East Africa was primarily to feed Britain, not the Africans; so was the 'poultry scheme' of Gambia; so were so many other 'schemes'. . . . During 1951 there was announced the discovery of important coal and iron deposits in Tanganyika; and Central African settlers talked eagerly of new railway communications which should link them with these deposits and the sea. The British Ministry of Supply offered higher prices for uranium ores and concentrates—in some cases 100 per cent higher than previous prices—to prospectors in the colonies and dependent territories. Expeditions departed for the Gold Coast and other colonies in search of mineral wealth. 'Leading Dutch banks and companies formerly operating in Indonesia,' reported *The Star* of Johannesburg, 'have combined to found the Netherlands Exploration Syndicate for Africa with the object of carrying out agricultural and mining surveys in African territories.' Even German industrialists were not forgotten in this new imperial shareout: Herr Franz Blücher, Minister for Marshal Plan Affairs in the West German Government, wrote in the *Düsseldorfer Handelsblatt* of February 23, 1951, that Western Germany would be permitted to invest capital in Africa—as he put it, 'to the economic advantage of both Africa and Europe'. Industrial concerns such as Henschel, Heinkel, Krupps, and Ruhrchemie were among West German interests now reported to be exporting capital to South Africa.

But capital from Europe began in these years to be outpaced and out-rivalled by capital from the United States: already American interests were said to control the key rail communications which join the great uranium and copper deposits of the Katanga, in the south-eastern Belgian Congo, with the Angolese port of Benguela on the Atlantic coast. In 1943, according to the United States Treasury, United States investment in South Africa amounted to 36 million dollars. Between 1943 and 1951, according to an official of the United States Commerce

THE CHOICE BEFORE US

Department, Mr. Bernard Blankenheimer, this investment had grown by 30 million dollars of new investment and another 20 million dollars of re-investment. In 1951 and 1952 large American loans were made to the Rhodesias on condition of repayment in strategic raw materials: lively U.S. interest was expressed in the prospects of federation.

Men of good will in many lands might discern in this new imperialism the makings of a plan for the enlightened development of Africa. If they did, they were evidently mistaken. For the tide of new capital was flowing into the same social and economic structure as before, and depended for its use, as much as ever, on supplies of cheap African labour. On the conditions, as we have seen, of African helotry. One clear proof of this—and others could be cited—was the manifest link between the flow of new capital into Southern and Northern Rhodesia and the settlers' drive for Central African federation. Yet the genuine development of Africa called for something else: it called for the abandonment of the system founded on 'white supremacy', for the radical transformation of colonial societies, for the end to African bondage and the age-old war between settler and African.

Fifty years ago, it was possible to think that 'white supremacy' could be upheld for long generations into the future. Under the conditions of pre-industrialism, many things were possible which now will not be possible much longer. For with industrialism in rapid growth, the upholding of such a system becomes a lost cause. In South Africa, where the process is far advanced, one may watch the spectacle of white men starving and persecuting the non-white workers and potential workers without whom their industries will fail. One may see how factories make consumer goods for populations which are denied the means to pay for them. Even if the rest of the world were stagnant and indifferent, such a system could not work for long. Either the industries will fail, or the workers will assert their rights. The struggle for assertion may be cruel and bloody. There are unhappy indications that it will be. But it will not be stopped for that, as the workers of other lands have amply proved.

Nor is the rest of the world either stagnant or indifferent. While white South Africa sends airmen to fight Chinese airmen in Korea, the

Africans begin to hear the drums of racial freedom beating from China. While whites draw down a curtain of ignorance between themselves and the Soviet Union, the Africans catch the echo, muffled perhaps but infinitely suggestive, of revolutions in Central Asia which have displaced the old life by a new life. The African world throbs with rumours of new hopes, new possibilities, new convictions. For the first time in history, Africans begin to apply a political judgment in looking for friends and allies outside their frontiers. Meanwhile, at home, they find themselves impelled by growing industrialism into a new concept of social relations: their ideas and their organizations begin to reflect those of the workers of more advanced countries. Their demand for freedom and equality contains a new note, more confident, more urgent. . . .

The choice for the whites, then, is no longer simply one of choosing between the two roads which lead to freedom or to bondage for the Africans. The choice now is differently framed. It becomes one of waging bitter and perhaps bloody struggles as the Africans step by step assert their rights—or of conforming intelligently to the needs of those social and economic forces which white civilization has itself forced into motion. Once again in contrast with the past, the first of these two roads can no longer be chosen with any hope of prolonged success.

The needs of these new social and economic forces certainly include the grant of political rights to Africans. They imply the concession of full democratic freedom within a multi-racial framework. But they include, no less, a number of specific changes which can also be defined. The first of these is the modernization of African agriculture by promoting African co-operatives and by supplying machinery, tools, and knowledge on a co-operative basis. The second is the reduction of rural over-population by deliberate urbanization, with Africans absorbed progressively into new industries. The third is the ending of social and industrial colour bars; and, as a corollary, the extension to Africans of full trade union rights and of the same security of tenure and social services as the whites enjoy. The list might be extended—nothing will be more important, for example, than the expansion of educational facilities for Africans.

THE CHOICE BEFORE US

These changes would open the way for further demands. That is certain enough. They would be steps on the road towards an African civilization which will come in any case, sooner or later, at more or less cost to whites and non-whites alike. They would be a guarantee, if made in good time, that this African civilization will not follow the same bitter road of narrow and reactionary chauvinism that so many white civilizations have followed; and that it will find within itself an honourable and lasting place for the indigenous white populations of Africa.

The British people, in all this, have a responsibility they cannot escape. If they are to conclude their imperialist epoch with honour to themselves, and without disaster to Africa, they will take thought to see that these changes are made, freely and fully, in territories where they still retain control. They will help to lay the foundations of an African civilization instead of seeking new forms of imperialism. They will welcome and encourage this emergent African civilization. They will see in it their own true advantage and profit as well as that of the Africans. Moreover, they will do this in the knowledge that, should they fail to make these changes and to see this vision of the future, they would serve notice on the world of their own blindness, their own political and moral bankruptcy.

SOME IMPORTANT DATES

- 1652 First settlers at the Cape with Jan van Riebeeck.
- 1760 White hunters cross the Orange River.
- 1779-99 The first three 'Kaffir Wars'.
- 1795 The first British occupation of the Cape.
- 1806 British re-occupy the Cape: remain there.
- 1836 Beginning of the Great Trek from the Cape Colony.
- 1846 Seventh 'Kaffir War'.
- 1843 British annex Natal.
- 1852 Sand River Convention: British recognize independence of the Transvaal.
- 1854 Bloemfontein Convention: British recognize the independence of the Orange Free State. First Cape Parliament.
- 1867 Diamonds discovered.
- 1868 British annex Basutoland.
- 1871 British annex diamond fields.
- 1872 Responsible Government granted to Cape Colony.
- 1886 Opening of Witwatersrand goldfields.
- 1892 Johannesburg connected with Cape railway system.
- 1899 Beginning of Boer War.
- 1902 Peace of Vereeniging ends Boer War.
- 1910 Cape Colony, Natal, Orange Free State, and Transvaal constituted as the Union of South Africa.
- 1924 Formation of Coalition Government between Nationalist and Labour Parties under Hertzog.
- 1933 Formation of Coalition between South African and Nationalist

SOME IMPORTANT DATES

Parties (reformed as the United Party) under Smuts. Malan breaks with Hertzog and leads part of Nationalist Party into wilderness as 'Purified Nationalist Party'.

1939 War with Germany.

1948 Purified Nationalist Party forms Government under Malan.

1952 Appeal Court declares invalid the Separate Representation of Coloured Voters Act: major constitutional crisis.

REFERENCES

[PART ONE]

1. *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, David Livingstone. Murray, 1857, p. 673.
2. See for example, *We Europeans*, J. Huxley. Cape, 1935.
3. *History of the Primates*, W. E. le Gros Clark. British Museum, 1949.
4. *Caliban in Africa*, L. Barnes. Gollancz, 1930, p. 140 footnote.
5. *A History of South Africa*, C. W. de Kiewiet. O.U.P., 1941.
6. House of Assembly, Debates, May 7-11, 1951.
7. *Cape Times*, August 25, 1951, article by J. Lewin.
8. de Kiewiet, op. cit., p. 56.
9. op. cit., p. 42.
10. *The Friend*, May 14, 1951.
11. House of Assembly, Debates, May 17, 1949 (Dr. Smit).
12. *The Great Trek*, E. A. Walker Black, 1934, p. 326.
13. *Native Labour in South Africa*, S. T. van der Horst. O.U.P., 1942. pp. 288 ff.
14. *The Autobiography of a Working Man*, A. Somerville (reprinted). Turnstile, 1951.
15. van der Horst, op. cit., p. 55.
16. *Complex South Africa*, W. M. Macmillan. Faber, 1930, p. 234.
17. van der Horst, op. cit., p. 116.
18. *Migrant Labour and Tribal Life*, I. Schapera. O.U.P., 1947, p. 157.
19. House of Assembly, Debates, May 17, 1949.
20. *Handbook of Race Relations*. O.U.P., 1949.
21. Native Laws Commission, 1946-8.
22. *Capital Investment in South Africa*, S. H. Frankel. Macmillan, 1938, p. 127.

REFERENCES

23. *The Star*, September 1, 1951.
24. *The South African Journal of Economics*, December 1950.
25. *Perspectives in Human Malnutrition*, J. and T. Gillman. New York, 1951.
26. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Disturbances in the Witzieshoek Native Reserve, U.G., 26-1951.
27. South African Press Agency, May 1, 1951.
28. House of Assembly, Debates, May 17, 1949.
29. Quoted by J. A. Hobson. *Imperialism*, Nisbet, 1902.
30. op. cit., p. 366.
31. Native Laws Commission.

[PART TWO]

32. *A Nation of 10,000,000*, H. M. Basner (speeches delivered in the Senate).
33. *The Rand Daily Mail*, September 13, 1951.
34. Mine Native Wages Commission, 1943, para. 13.
35. *Union Year Book*, 1948, p. 922.
36. Frankel, op. cit., pp. 89 ff.
37. *Union Year Book*, 1948, p. 926.
38. Mine Native Wages Commission, 1943, para. 68.
39. de Kiewiet, op. cit., p. 159.
40. Mine Native Wages Commission, 1943, para. 67.
41. Report of Committee appointed by H. E. Governor to inquire into Migrant Labour, 1935, Protectorate of Nyasaland, Zomba, 1936.
42. loc. cit.
43. Schapera, op. cit., Summary.
44. op. cit., p. 85.
45. Mine Native Wages Commission, 1943, appendix.
46. See paper in *Proceedings of the Transvaal Mine Medical Officers' Association*, August 1947.
48. Native Laws Commission: Consideration of Evidence of Gold Producers' Committee.

REFERENCES

47. *Lalela Zulu*, Hugh Tracey, Johannesburg. I am indebted to Mr. Tracey for generous permission to reprint these verses.
49. Mine Native Wages Commission, 1943, para. 459.
50. Hoernlé Memorial Lecture, 1951.
51. van der Horst, *op. cit.*, p. 263.
52. H. J. van Eck's figure. U.N. *Review of Economic Conditions in Africa* gives per capita earnings of Africans in all secondary industry as £95 in 1945-6, and of Europeans £394.
53. Report of the Commission appointed to inquire into acts of violence committed by natives at Krugersdorp, Newlands, Randfontein, and Newclare, U.G. 47-1950.
54. House of Assembly, Debates, April 20, 1950.
55. *The Star*, January 31, 1951.
56. *The Rand Daily Mail*, August 25, 1951.
57. *Rooiyard: A Sociological Study*, E. Hellmann (reprinted). O.U.P., 1948.
58. Bulletin of S.A.N.T.A.
59. *The Rand Daily Mail*, August 25, 1951.
60. *International Labour Review*, I.L.O., May 1951, p. 490.

[PART THREE]

61. *Time Longer than Rope*, E. Roux. Gollancz, 1948. Quoting *Cape Argus* of June 11, 1918.
62. *The Rand Daily Mail*, August 22, 1951.
63. *Comrade Bill*, R. J. Cope, p. 277.
64. The Act of 1911 contained no colour bar. But a bar was introduced in regulations purporting to be made under the Act. Over a decade later these regulations were held *ultra vires* by the Courts. The amending Act of 1926 then made the colour bar explicitly legal.
65. *The Rand Daily Mail*, October 2, 1951.
66. *The Rand Daily Mail*, October 9, 1951.
67. *The Star*, October 1, 1951.
68. *Attitude to Africa*. Penguin, 1951, p. 113.
69. *The Star*, May 22, 1951.

REFERENCES

[PART FOUR]

70. I am greatly indebted to the Editor of *The New Statesman and Nation* for generous permission to reprint extracts from articles on Basutoland and South Africa contributed to that periodical.

71. *Early Days in Maseru*, Major G. Tylden. Maseru, 1944.

72. Address on Soil Conservation in Basutoland, Maseru, October 8, 1949. Secretariat Minute No. 467.

73. *The New Boer War*, L. Barnes. Hogarth, 1932, p. 80.

74. *Native Administration in the British African Territories*, Lord Hailey, vol. 4, p. 2. H.M.S.O., 1951.

75. *Mochochonono*, May 18, 1951.

76. *The Star*, October 9, 1951.

77. Cmd. 8209, H.M.S.O., 1951.

78. Legislative Assembly. Salisbury, Debates, November 30, 1944.

79. These and following statistics from Economic and Statistical Bulletin of Southern Rhodesia: Central African Statistical Office, Salisbury.

80. See pamphlets issued by the Capricorn Africa Society, Salisbury, 1950 and 1951.

81. Legislative Assembly, Debates, November 27, 1944.

82. Legislative Assembly, Debates, November 30, 1944.

83. Legislative Assembly, Debates, November 29, 1944.

84. *The Times*, June 18, 1951.

85. Hansard, March 12, 1941. Mr. G. Hall, Secretary of State for the Colonies, replying to a question by Mr. A. Creech-Jones.

86. J. W. Davidson, op. cit., p. 82.

87. Report on the Co-operative Prospects in Northern Rhodesia, W. K. H. Campbell, C.M.G., Government Printer, Lusaka, 1945.

88. *The Colour Bar on the Copperbelt*, J. Lewin. South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg, 1941.

89. J. W. Davidson, op. cit., p. 88.

90. Central African Territories: Comparative Survey of Native Policy. Cmd. 8235. H.M.S.O., 1951, p. 35.

REFERENCES

91. *The Economics of Detribalization in Northern Rhodesia*, G. Wilson. Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, Livingstone, 1941.
92. J. W. Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
93. *The Times*, October 31, 1951.
94. *Esprit*, Paris, October, 1951, p. 28.

INDEX

- Adler, L. W., 128
African National Congress, 197
Alexandra, 121 ff.
Andrews, Bill, 188
Anglo-American Corporation, The, 111, 241, 251
Apartheid, 27, 63, 76, 89, 163
Appeal Court, South African, 163 ff., 172
Austin, Alfred, 150
- Ballinger, Margaret, 33
Barnes, Leonard, 22, 214
Basner, H. M., 133
Basuto, Basutoland, 48, 56 ff., 69 ff., 205 ff.
Blanke Werkers Beskerminingsbond, 160
Bledisloe Commission (*see also* Federation), 260
Bremer, Karl, 167
British South Africa Company, 48, 226 ff., 240 ff.
Broederbond, 154 ff., 161, 171
Burrows, H. R., 109
- Café de move-on*, 132 ff., 138, 142
Campbell, W. K. H., 246
Carrington, C. E., 227
Cilliers, A. C., 27, 198
Ciskei, Native Reserve, 62 ff.
Cloete, Henry, 43
Coetzee, J. C., 88
Coloured community, voters, 31
Commission, Native Laws, *see* Native Laws Commission; Native Mine Workers, *see* Native Mine Workers Commission; of Inquiry into Disturbances, etc. at Newlands, etc., Report of, 110; Native Affairs, 1949, *see* Native Affairs Commission; of Inquiry, etc., at Witzieshoek, 71; of Inquiry into School-feeding, 87
Co-operatives, 246 ff.
Copperbelt, 111, 191, 241 ff.
Cornelius, Johanna, 176 ff.
- Diamonds, discovery of, 49
Diederichs, N., 27, 63, 159
Düsseldorfer Handelsblatt, 271
- van Eck, H. J., 108 ff., 142, 188
Eiselen, W. M., 27, 28
- Fagan Commission, *see* Native Laws Commission
Federasie van Afrikaanse Kulturvereenigings, 160
Federation, Central African, 255 ff.
Food and Agriculture Organization (U.N.), report on Karoo, 42
Foreign Affairs, 52
Frankel, S. H., 62, 92
Friedman, B., 33
Friend, The, 42, 167
- Garment Workers' Union, South African, 110, 176, 183
Garner, Rt. Rev. L. C., 168
Geko-Ordeneerde Raad van Vakvereenigings, 187
Gillman, J. and L., 66
Gold, discovery of, 92; dividends, 92; methods of working, 93; labour force, 93; wages, 93-4; Southern Rhodesian, 226

INDEX

- Goodwin, Brian, 249
 Griffiths, Rt. Hon. J., P.C., M.P., 253, 257, 261
 Grootraad, *see* Broederbond
- Hart, Hector, 112
 Hellmann, Ellen, 126, 128
 Hertzog, General, 155, 159, 162
 High Court of Parliament, 164
 Hofmeyr, J. H., 171
 Huggins, Sir Godfrey, 225, 233 ff.
 Huyser, Piet, 180
- Immorality Act, 23
 Indians, franchise, 161, 198
 Industrial Legislation Commission, 109, 184
Industrial Review, 111
 Industrialization, development of, 108-9
Inspan, 44
- Jones, G. I., 220 ff.
- Kahn, S., 33 ff.
 Kaluwa, S., 252
 Kane-Berman, L., 169
 Katanga, 241, 271
 Katilungu, L., 250
 Kiewiet, C. W. de, 24, 83
 Khama, Seretse and Tshekedi, 72, 201, 217, 218
- Labour, convict, 45; comparison with U.K., 47; shortage of, 49; migrant, 77; health, 98
 Labour Party, 129, 184, 189, 191
 Language Ordinance, Transvaal, 167
 Livingstone, David, 10, 105, 239
 Lobengula, 225
 Lombard, Ivan Makepeace, 157
 Louw, E., 148
 Lugard, Lord, 260
- Malan, Dr. D. F., 148, 155, 161, 164, 170
 Malan, Group-Captain 'Sailor', 166, 170
 Malherbe, E. G., 76
 Matthews, Z. K., 52
 Migrant Labour, illegal entry, 45; extensiveness, 77, 95; special committee, Nyasaland, 96; Bechuanaland, 96; health, etc., 98; attitude of mining companies, 106; attitude of manufacturers, 110
 Mining and Works Act, 191
Mochochonono, 219
 Moore, Sir L., 245
 Moroka settlement, 91, 117, 129 ff.
 Moshesh, 207
 Mpanza Sofanzonke, 129
- Nationalist Government, Party: mixed marriages, 23; Coloured voters, 30; Suppression of Communism Act, 34; attitude to industry, 77, 109, 114; deposition of chiefs, 72; school-feeding, 87; attitude to Hitlerism, 147; strength in rural areas, 162; attitude to Act of Union, 164; to language question, 167; to Torch Commando, 169; to trade unions, 187
 Native Administration Act 1927, 72
 Native Affairs Commission 1949, 121
 Native Laws Commission, 53, 63, 77, 84, 90, 98, 174
 Native Mine Workers Commission, 56, 77, 95
 Northern Rhodesia, 77, 95, 191, 240 ff.; African Congress of, 264
 Nyasaland, 77, 95, 253; African Congress of, 264
- Ollemans, Susanna, crèche, 84
Optima, 111
 Orlando, 134
 Ossewa Brandwag, 149, 156
- Paramountcy, doctrine of Native, 257
 'Partnership', doctrine of, 257

INDEX

- Passfield, Lord, 257
 Philip, John, 38
 Pimville, 130, 134
 du Plessis, Otto, 147, 161
 Population, comparative, 53; shift to towns, 77-8; malnutrition, 87; health, 194
 Portuguese colonies, 77, 97

Rand Daily Mail, The, 23, 107, 110, 192
 Reddingsdaadbond, 159
 Reeves, Rt. Rev. R. A., 167
 Reserves, Native: effects of cash taxation, 50 ff.; density of population compared, 51, 245; general conditions, 55; proportions in reserves, 63; conditions in Transkei, Ciskei, 64; health, etc., 66
 Rhodes, Cecil, 49, 151, 170, 225, 240
Rhodesian Monthly Review, The, 16
 van Rooy, J. C. 157
 Rouse, Ven R. P. Y., 167.

 Sachs, E. S., 34, 177, 188 ff.
 Scheepers, A., 193
 Schoeman, B., 148
 Scott, Rev. M., 196
 Separate Representation of Coloured Voters Act, 30, 163
 Slaves, emancipation of, 38
 Smit, R., 64
 Smuts, Jan, 58, 107, 155, 161, 165, 171, 190, 191
 Soil erosion, Kalahari, Karoo, Free State, 42; Native Reserves, 62; elsewhere, 70
 South African Trades and Labour Council, 192-3
 Southern Rhodesia, 77, 224 ff.; native husbandry, 230; electoral roll, 234; Labour parties, 235
 South-West Africa, 162
 Springbok Legion, 130, 170
 Stallard Commission, doctrine: 139, 141, 229, 231

Star, The, 25, 46, 169, 271

 Tanganyika, 77, 95
Times, The, 267
 Tobruk, 130, 196
 Torch Commando, 166 ff.
 Tracey, Hugh, 99
 Trade Unions: gold-mining, 106, 192; garment workers, 110, 176; Nationalist attitude to, 160; in secondary industry, 183, 186; in Northern Rhodesia, 247
 Transkei, 51, 201
 Transvaal Language Ordinance, 167
Transvaler, Die, 158-9
 Trek, the Great, 38, 160
 Trichardt, Louis, 38
 Tuberculosis, 194

 United Nations, 199
 United Party, 31, 35, 75, 78, 151, 155, 162, 170, 172, 184

Veld Trust News, 42
 Venter, J. J., 192

 Wages, agricultural, 4 Bloemfontein, 88; gold-mining, 93-4, 97; Bechuanaland, 97; general increase of, 109; Zwelitsha, 110; comparative, 194; remittances by miners, 212; in Southern Rhodesia, 226; in Northern Rhodesia, 244
 van der Walt, H. S., 88
 War Veterans Action Committee, 167
 Welensky, R., 248, 255
 Wilson, N. H., 228
 Witwatersrand, 92, 141
 Witzieshoek, 65, 141

 Zulu, S., 267
 Zwelitsha, 110



BASIL DAVIDSON

Basil Davidson was born in Bristol in 1914. Before the war he worked as a journalist and travelled a great deal in South and East Europe. In 1938 he joined the staff of the *Economist*. From 1940-1945 he served in the British Army and was for some time with the G.H.Q., M.P.F. In August 1943 he dropped by parachute to the Partisan forces in Yugoslavia, where he remained until November 1944, and in January 1945 he was again dropped by parachute, this time into Northern Italy where he remained until the end of the Italian campaign. He was promoted to Lt.-Col. in April 1945. For his services he received the M.C., two mentions in dispatches, and the Bronze Star (U.S. Army). After demobilization from the Army he joined the staff of *The Times*, first of all as Paris Correspondent, and then as principal European leader writer. He worked with *The Times* until 1950 when he joined the *Statesman*.